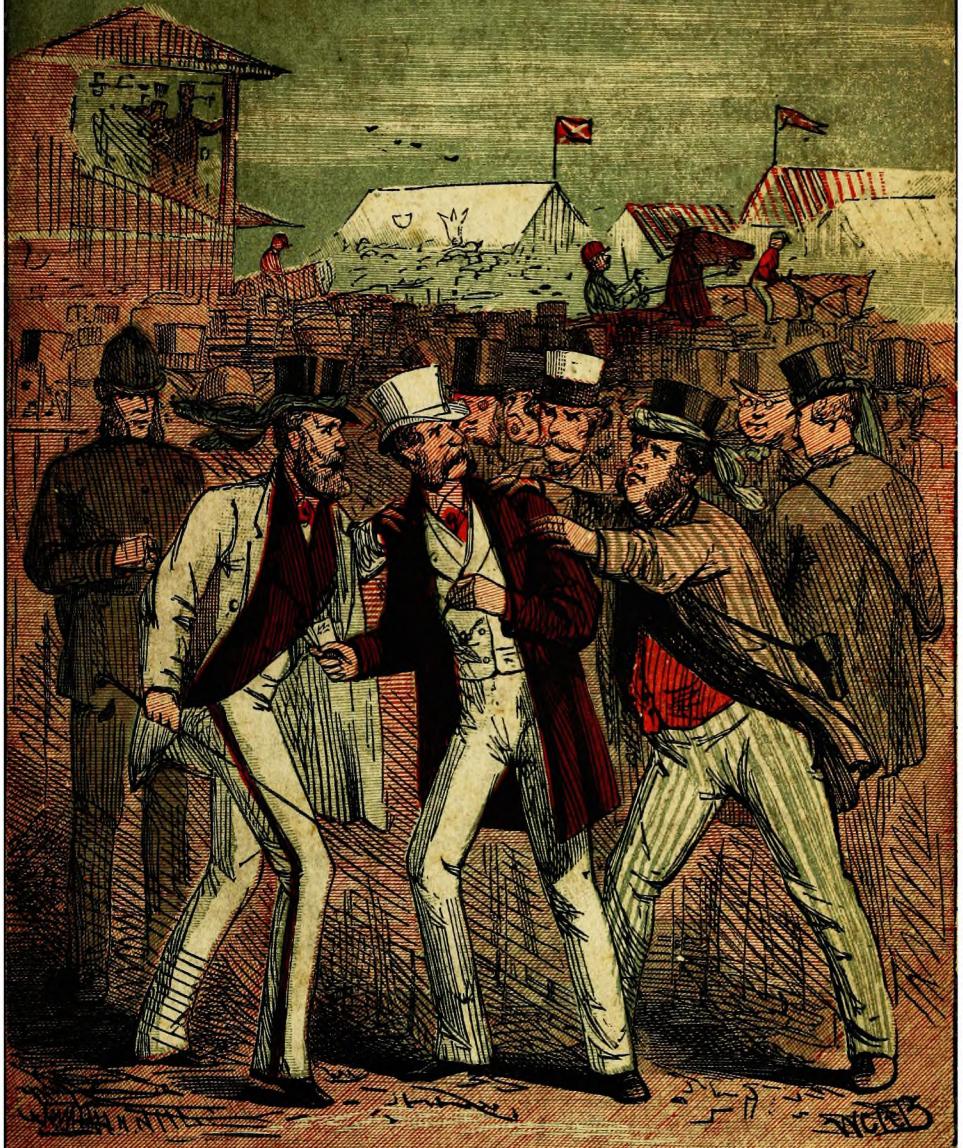


OUT OF THE RING

OR
SCENES OF SPORTING LIFE



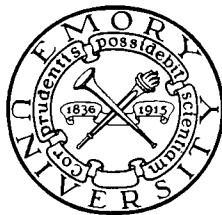


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OUT OF THE RING,

OR

SCENES OF SPORTING LIFE.

BY

A BETTING MAN.

LONDON:
WARD, LOCK, AND TYLER,
WARWICK HOUSE, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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SCENES OF SPORTING LIFE.



OUT OF THE RING.

THE night before the Derby did not promise very well for what it has become the custom to call London's annual carnival. It had been a disagreeable May as far as it had gone, and though frost and snow were not expected to prevail, rain was anticipated. The air was hot and close and muggy; towards ten o'clock rain began to fall heavily, and those men who had chartered hansoms thought of throwing them over and going down by rail. The morning broke dull and heavy; the sky was overcast, and the clouds were low. There was one advantage arising from the rain—not a particle of dust was to be seen. Towards eleven, however, the sun burst forth in all its glory, and a finer spring day could not be wished for.

Mr. Septimus Golding, a gentleman of small fortune, passionately fond of horses, and with a firm belief in the advisability of turning an honest penny

by betting, went early to the Waterloo Station and booked himself for Epsom. He looked in at the King's Arms and had 'a beer;' at the corner of the street he met a tout with whom he had a chatting acquaintance, and gave him half-a-crown for a tip, the good thing being Columbus, a horse belonging to the Marquis of Battle, which, as it was first favourite at twos to one, was a very safe prediction as things went.

Mr. Golding toiled up the hill, and at the first booth had a 'cold gin' just to correct the beer, and wandered about till the bell rang to clear the course, when he wended his way to the paddock.

The thick and high hedge shut the paddock from public view, and the grass grew long around the little knot of trees which marked its centre. Of the cracks, the earliest to show was Chasseur, with the cipher of the Count de Challusse on the clothing. He was a nice animal enough, but not one to care about, and one willingly passed from the representative of the French stable to Emu, a bay horse of far more taking style. He was pounds better than on the Two Thousand day, and Mr. Golding thought that he looked very much like 'getting up the hill.' Columbus, the favourite, came next, and looked like one accustomed to run in a dray. He was a light roan with a big angular head, but he was very powerful. Freemason excited great admiration, though small in size. His coat was like a piece of red satin; he was praised by all; from his hocks to his crest something good was picked out, and by bloom

of coat and carriage of head he looked too good to be beaten.

Mr. Golding left the paddock and hastened back to the ring—for he was a great believer in post betting—and invested his small capital on Emu.

Presently the time came for saddling and starting, and the crowd was driven back into two solid walls, having a line of grass between them. The stands were black with people; and the funny, almost grotesque-looking little lads and men, who were in reality trained and famous jockeys, threw off their clothing, and became beautiful in many colours, just for all the world as if they had divided Joseph's famous coat between them, and each taken a few pieces.

At length the nineteen horses were off to a good start, which gladdened the heart of Mr. McGeorge, and the impetuous Emu took the lead, the cracks lying well together in the rear. Columbus is beaten at Tattenham Corner, and Emu's jockey pulls him back a little as the Frenchman creeps up. For a moment it seems as if Freemason, with his stout quarters, was to win, but Emu and Chasseur draw up side by side and they flash to the front.

As they pass the Grand Stand, Emu shows a little ahead, and keeps the lead by tremendous strides, and so they whirl past the judge's box, Emu a clever winner by a short head, amid the plaudits of the crowd and the silence of the ring. The victorious horse goes into the enclosure, and Sir Frederick Cotton, his owner, shakes

the jockey by the hand and affectionately caresses his splendid animal.

Such, in brief, is the epic of the Derby.

Mr. Septimus Golding had, in his own happy phraseology, 'landed a pot,' and he goes to the hill perfectly happy to look for a lunch, which he is not long in finding, for one of the first carriages he met contained his cousin Felice Golding, who with her guardian Mr. Summers, a stock-broker, Mrs. Wentworth her aunt, and Emily Sinclair her companion, had come down from London to enjoy the day.

Felice Golding was an heiress.

Her father and mother had died when she was young, leaving her to the care of her aunt Mrs. Wentworth, a widow, with a small income. The first ladies' schools in London and Paris had done their best for Felice Golding, and at one-and-twenty she came to reside on her estates in Bedfordshire, living in a fine old mansion called Golding Hall.

Mrs. Wentworth, of course, resided with her, and enjoyed all the luxuries which wealth could procure, and all the privileges which high station conferred.

In everything she gave way to her niece, because she knew that if she ran counter to the will of the imperious young lady, she could be turned out, and would have to go back to her shabby apartment in Bloomsbury, and live on her income of two hundred a year.

As it was, she had a retinue of servants to wait upon her. Felice made her presents of clothes and

money. The management of the household devolved upon her, and she was virtually the mistress of Golding Hall.

No one disputed any point with Felice : she was a spoilt child of fortune.

No wonder her temper was imperious, and she could not brook restraint.

She had ten thousand a year, houses, land ; and tenants all bowed down before her ; and as a necessity of her position, she was pestered by all the men she met, for she was surrounded with fortune-hunters.

Indeed, if Felice had been brought up in a different manner, and had not been so self-willed and capricious, she would have been a desirable wife without any fortune whatever, for she was very beautiful.

In figure she was slight and well made ; very fair, with blue eyes, small mouth, hands, and feet. Her voice was low and sweet, when she was not enraged ; then it became shrill, angry, and shrewish.

Everything that money could buy was hers. Her wardrobe was magnificent, and her taste in dress was unexceptionable ; for she had in Paris learnt the art of dressing, always a desirable accomplishment in a woman, who, unless she knows how to advantageously blend colours, never looks well, however expensive her costume may be.

Before her death, Felice's mother had adopted a girl who was the daughter of one of her tenants. This girl was named Emily Sinclair ; and Mrs. Golding had

asked Felice, on her death-bed, to take care of her, and let her be her companion.

So, when Felice came back from Paris, her household consisted of Emily Sinclair and Mrs. Wentworth; occasionally her cousin, Septimus Golding, stayed at the Hall. He was a great admirer of Felice, who played with his feelings, leading him to suppose she cared for him, when in reality she did not.

Emily's position in the house was peculiar.

Miss Golding did not pay her so much attention as she did her French maid, Rosine; but her mother's dying request she held sacred, and Emily accompanied her in her walks, went shopping with her, wrote her letters, and read to her.

In short, her position was that of a poor dependent.

She bore the cross she had to carry bravely, for she was a good girl, and worthy of a better fate. The meek and resigned expression of her face showed that she was not happy. Her dress was poor and simple, and presented a great contrast to that of Felice, who looked upon her as a foil, to set off her attractions with additional effect.

Mrs. Wentworth was obliged, as we have already said, to cringe to Felice and put up with her ill-temper, and she revenged herself upon Emily Sinclair, whom she often drove to the verge of despair by her unkind remarks and disagreeable way of speaking.

Septimus Golding was an idle gay man, with a small income of his own. He had held a commission in a

militia regiment, and called himself Captain in consequence.

He had but one object in life, and that was to marry his rich cousin.

Felice seemed glad to see him, and after shaking hands with all the party, he made himself useful by brewing a cup with champagne, soda-water, and a few mysterious trifles, which he called his secret. When the racing was over, he found a seat in the carriage, and was taken back to town, Miss Felice Golding being then staying with her guardian Mr. Summers, at his house in Hyde-park-square.

About a month afterwards she returned to her country-house, where she had been domiciled as her own mistress for about eighteen months, when to her surprise she heard a report that a small estate in the neighbourhood had been bought by a gentleman strange to that part of the country.

The name of the property was The Weird.

Honor Clayton was the name of the new proprietor. No one knew much about his antecedents. Some said he had made his fortune in India, in the opium trade.

He was about forty, not bad-looking, though dark for an Englishman; engaging in his manner, and well versed in that sort of small-talk which is so agreeable to ladies.

Quickly getting into the best society in the neighbourhood, he met Miss Golding, who invited him to call at the Hall; an invitation which he did not neglect.

Septimus Golding was away in Belgium on some volunteer business, in which he was interested, while this acquaintance sprang up between his cousin and the stranger.

If he had been on the spot, it would have annoyed him greatly.

There was no doubt that Mr. Honor Clayton's first intention was to make himself as amiable as he possibly could to the heiress; but when he came to know Emily Sinclair, he found a charm in her conversation and modest demeanour which he could not altogether despise.

His visits to the Hall became frequent, and Mrs. Wentworth, who did not like the idea of her niece marrying, because she would in that event lose the 'office she held and its emoluments, tried to prevent the intimacy increasing.

'My dear,' she said one evening after Mr. Clayton had taken his departure, 'don't you think that man comes here too often? People will talk.'

'About what?' asked Felice, looking up almost angrily.

'Your want of discretion. Mr. Clayton may be a very nice companion; but you would never think, I am sure, of marrying such a man.'

'Why not?' inquired Felice, in her laconic manner.

'In the first place, he is not rich enough for you, nor is he good enough. You ought to have a nobleman for your partner in life.'

'My dear aunt,' rejoined Felice, 'you will oblige

me very much by minding your own business. I allow no one to dictate to me. I am capable of judging for myself. No one but yourself has thought of such a thing as a marriage between myself and Mr. Clayton. I have to thank you for putting the idea in my head.'

Mrs. Wentworth was not satisfied. She thought that Felice had not shown her her whole mind. Going away, she met Emily Sinclair in the passage, and, as was her custom, said something in an insolent manner to her.

Emily said nothing, but passed on.

'Stop!' cried Mrs. Wentworth; 'you seem to forget your position here. I will not be treated in that manner. Whenever I have occasion to speak to you, I am met with the most determined and obstinate defiance. It is useless to deny it. Your silence is in itself insolent. I insist that you speak to me, miss.'

'What can I say?' replied Emily.

'I found fault with you for leaving your mistress alone. You know that she gets irritable when there is no one with her; and when I went in she found fault with me, so that I have to suffer for your neglect.'

'Miss Golding is not my mistress,' said Emily quietly. 'Pardon me for contradicting you.'

'What!' cried Mrs. Wentworth, with rising anger; 'are you not a poor dependent on her bounty?'

'So are you, for the matter of that,' rejoined Emily, with more than usual spirit.

'Insolent! I have an independent income, which

I derived from my husband. This is unbearable. I will complain to my niece. Either you or I must leave this house.'

'Whichever you like,' answered Emily. 'My position here as companion to Miss Golding is not such a desirable one that I should put up continually with your ill-temper as well as her caprice. I am her companion, Mrs. Wentworth, not her servant, and I would not bear with her as I do if I did not remember how much I have to thank her sainted mother's benevolent heart for. Mrs. Golding took me into her house, poor, friendless, and an orphan; she begged me to be her daughter's friend and guide as well as I was able; at the same time she recommended me to her generosity. Make what complaint you like.'

'We shall see—we shall see,' answered Mrs. Wentworth, biting her lips, as she retraced her steps to the boudoir.

Emily heaved a deep sigh, and went to her bedroom, thinking it best not to appear again that night unless sent for.

Mrs. Wentworth was sufficiently annoyed to venture to speak to the heiress about her grievance, but Felice was in no humour to listen to her. When she had heard what her aunt had to say, she replied petulantly, 'Please do not worry me with a detail of your wretched squabbles. Is it not enough that you should accuse me of a flirtation of which I am perfectly innocent? Do you want to drive away every one I have about me?

Marriage will be my only refuge, if I am to be constantly annoyed as I am now. It matters very little to you whether I am made ill or not. Leave me, if you please; I want to be alone.'

Mrs. Wentworth would have said much, had she dared to do so. As it was, she wished her niece good-night, and retired, as she was requested to do.

When alone again, Felice took from under the pillow of the sofa on which she was negligently reclining, a *carte-de-visite* of a gentleman.

It was a faithful representation of Honor Clayton, who had presented it to her that evening, when the lynx-like eyes of Mrs. Wentworth were not upon him, and it had been reduced to a vignette size and set in a handsome gold locket, sparkling with brilliants, the work of Metcalfe of Pall Mall.

Felice raised it to her lips, and kissed it tenderly.

'He is very handsome!' she murmured.

'Hullo! What's that you've got there, Feely?' cried a rough voice at her elbow.

She hastily slipped the likeness into her pocket, and, looking up in great surprise, recognised her cousin Septimus, who had come to pay her a visit unexpectedly, and without announcing his arrival.

Septimus was a splendid fellow to look at; so tall, so well proportioned, and such a grand realisation of a man. But when you had found all that out, and admitted it duly, you stopped. His face was vacant: he was a big burly giant, and nothing more. Nature had

given him plenty of body, but she had been very chary in the matter of mind.

‘You here, Sep?’ said the heiress, biting her lip.

‘Yes,’ he answered, twirling his tawny moustache; ‘why shouldn’t I be? Have you not given me *carte blanche*? You told me to come when I liked, and go when I liked. Can you blame me for taking advantage of your kindness?’

‘No,’ she replied quietly; ‘what is the good of rich relations if you do not make use of them? Why have them?’

‘That is rather spiteful,’ he answered with a little sarcasm. ‘If I am a burden to you, send me in a bill for board and lodging when I go away. I daresay I can get my acceptance discounted somewhere in London, and pay you.’

‘Septimus, if you dare to talk to me in that way, I will never speak to you again: more, I will tell you to leave my house this instant,’ exclaimed Felice angrily.

‘There are, thanks be to Providence, such things as hotels,’ he rejoined.

Felice could not help smiling, for the good-humoured giant threw himself into a chair, stretched out his legs before the fire, and said, ‘I sha’n’t go till I’ve rested myself, and had something to refresh the inner man.’

‘You are incorrigible, and must have a peculiar idea of the privileges of cousins,’ remarked Felice.

‘I know you are not one of the best-tempered little

women in England, Feely, and so I don't mind you. What's put you out?' asked Septimus Golding.

'Nothing,' she replied carelessly.

'It always is nothing with women; generally, however, there is a very big something behind. It is no business of mine though, so if you'll ring for supper, and order my bed to be seen to, I'll light a cigar and make myself happy,' said Septimus.

His wishes in this respect were complied with.

Felice was rather annoyed at his unexpected return, because she knew that he was rough and ready and no respecter of persons, and might say something of a disagreeable nature to Mr. Clayton.

Septimus had often remarked to her, 'You do not believe what I say, but I shall marry you some day, Feely;' and she felt sure that if he found a rival in the field, he would be indignant, though, as far as she was concerned, she had never had the faintest idea of marrying her cousin.

The next day Mr. Clayton called to ask Mrs. Wentworth and Felice to go for a drive with him in his mail phaeton.

They accepted the invitation gladly, but it was not extended to Septimus, to whom Mr. Clayton did not seem to take a great liking.

Honor Clayton remained to dinner; and by his general hilarity, his flow of conversation, and the various anecdotes he related, made himself the observed of all observers, and completely put an extinguisher upon Sep-

timus, whose conversation had hitherto monopolised the dinner-table.

Emily Sinclair seldom spoke unless she was addressed directly. She had advanced opinions, nevertheless, on most questions of the day, and was strongly liberal in politics. When Mr. Clayton touched upon that dangerous and forbidden ground, she had a chance to speak.

Mr. Clayton had said that, in his opinion, the working population of this country were oppressed and down-trodden, and that exceptional legislation should be extended in their favour.

‘I can’t think so,’ remarked Miss Golding. ‘Education, which you recommend, is objectionable. I never had a servant worth her wages who could read or write, because she would waste her time in both reading and writing. No, the lower classes are down, and it is the proper policy of the rich to keep them down.’

‘That is a very illiberal doctrine,’ replied Mr. Clayton gravely; ‘and one I did not expect to hear enunciated by you, Miss Golding. In my opinion, the prosperity of the country depends upon the education of the masses.’

‘What education is required for people who live by the work of their hands?’

‘You wish to degrade a human being to the level of a beast of burden.’

Felice looked annoyed.

‘I appeal to Miss Sinclair,’ he continued.

‘I am entirely of your opinion,’ she said. ‘Mankind are not ordained to a life of slavery. The sun of enlightenment beams gradually upon us, and education is the sheet-anchor of the State. As education spreads, so will crime decrease, and erring man become as nearly perfect as he can.’

‘I honour you for those sentiments, which I am proud to reciprocate,’ said Mr. Clayton. ‘Yours is indeed a noble mind, for you can pity the degradation of the poor and——’

‘Feel for the great unwashed,’ interrupted Septimus Golding.

Honor Clayton took no notice of this remark, and, after a pause, addressed his conversation now to Emily, now to his hostess. During the evening he made a point of ignoring Septimus Golding, much to that individual’s annoyance. To Emily Sinclair he was more than usually attentive.

In the drawing-room, after dinner, he had an opportunity of speaking to her, while the heiress was playing some difficult fantasia on the piano.

‘You do not play?’ he said.

‘Very little. I had no one to pay for my education,’ answered Emily. ‘What I know, I picked up myself. I am a dependent on Miss Golding’s bounty, as I daresay you have heard.’

‘No, indeed. I thought you were her companion.’

‘So I am; but that involves a position of depend-

ence. I trust I have a good heart, and a proper knowledge of right and wrong. Of anything more I cannot boast, Mr. Clayton,' said Emily.

'What can be a greater source of pride to you?' he answered; adding, 'Believe me, I have a great respect for people who can feel for those beneath them in the social scale. Fortune has smiled upon me. I was, however, once poor, and my purse is always open to the deserving.'

Felice had finished playing, and seeing Emily Sinclair talking to Mr. Clayton so apparently confidentially, turned angrily round on the music-stool, and said, 'You had best go upstairs and finish those letters I commissioned you to write. They are important, and I have other things for you to do in the morning.'

Emily rose to go with a weary air, which excited pity in Honor Clayton's breast; and he felt, at that moment, much more sympathy with the poor dependent than he did with the rich heiress.

'I do hope you will not interrupt the interesting conversation we were enjoying, Miss Golding,' exclaimed Clayton. 'Rather come and join us.'

'What is the subject?' she asked.

'The poor, and their treatment by the rich.'

'An unpalatable subject to me. I leave all my affairs in the hands of my steward,' answered Felice. 'I pay subscriptions to various charities, and I give gifts at Christmas time. For me the poor don't exist. I pay rates for them, as I would any other thing which

is necessary; but I do not wish to be brought in contact with the people.'

'Are those your opinions, Mr. Clayton?' asked Emily.

'O, no; I am shocked to hear them,' he had the courage to answer.

'You always will hear them in this house while I am its mistress,' said Felice; 'and if hearing them pains you, your best course is to stay away. I do not say this rudely; but the reply on my part is necessitated by your remark.'

Emily wished Honor Clayton good-night, and went away. Felice retired to the sofa, and spoke a few words to Septimus Golding, and then began to talk to Mrs. Wentworth.

Seeing that his society was no longer agreeable to the heiress, Honor Clayton was too proud to stay. At first he had been attracted to her, more by her beauty than by her fortune. Finding that her good looks were not accompanied with that consideration for others, and that amiability of disposition that he so much admired in women, he felt disappointed.

He asked permission to ring for his carriage, which Felice, who was really angry, granted with an inclination of the head.

Septimus took a seat by his side.

'I want to speak to you,' he said. 'Can you give me a ride towards your place?'

'On consideration, no,' answered Honor Clayton.

‘ You have your own apartment here, I suppose. Whatever you have to say is best said on the spot.’

‘ O, very well. Talk here, then ; only, if I lower my voice, understand it is because I do not wish to hurt my cousin’s feelings.’

‘ Yes,’ ejaculated Clayton.

‘ You seem to me, sir,’ continued Septimus, ‘ to be making love, first, to my cousin ; secondly, to the companion ; and to be playing one off against the other. That is conduct I do not like.’

‘ Do you assert this as a fact ?’

‘ I do, unhesitatingly.’

‘ Then you are most impertinent. I shall not take the trouble to give you any explanation. I do not recognise your right to ask for it,’ replied Clayton angrily.

‘ I am my cousin’s only friend. I must protect her ; and before you leave this house, I must have an answer.’

‘ To what ?’

‘ To this question—why do you come here ? I will put it more strongly to you—is it Miss Golding you admire, or is it Emily Sinclair ?’

‘ This is most unwarrantable and impertinent !’ said Honor Clayton. ‘ It appears that, presuming on your size and your brute force, you are trying to bully me into an admission. I shall refuse to give it you, sir.’

‘ Once more,’ persisted Septimus ; ‘ are your intentions honourable as regards my cousin ?’

‘Miss Golding has treated me with kindness, which I have endeavoured to return to the best of my ability; that is all I can say now. I will write to you to-morrow. If my reply is not satisfactory to your questions, you can find me at The Weird.’

He rose, and wished Miss Golding and Mrs. Wentworth good-night. Septimus went into the passage, and made a motion, as if he would stop him.

‘Stand back, sir, or, by heaven, I shall strike you!’ cried Honor.

Bully though he was, Septimus fell back at this threat of a determined man.

Fortunately, there was no collision between them, or the consequences might have been dreadful.

Getting into his carriage, Mr. Clayton drove away; and before going to bed, wrote two letters.

They were as follows :

‘SIR,—I beg to inform you that I have invariably treated Miss Golding as a kind friend whom I esteemed. I can see now that our opinions on many subjects do not coincide, and since the remarks you made to me, I presume, with her consent, it will be best for us to remain as strangers in the future.—I am, sir, yours, &c.

‘HONOR CLAYTON.’

‘MY DEAR MISS SINCLAIR,—Pardon the abruptness with which I write, but I cannot, from circumstances which have arisen, call at Golding Hall again, and I cannot resist telling you how deeply I sympathise with

you in your present painful position ; so much so, indeed, that I long to take you away from the house of bondage. If you love me as I love you, and will be my wife, retire at once to any friends you may have, notify me of the fact, and I will visit you without delay. I shall know little peace until I hear from you.—Ever yours, lovingly,

‘ HONOR CLAYTON.’

It need not be said that within four-and-twenty hours after the dispatch of these letters, Mr. Clayton received a letter from Emily Sinclair, who had gone on a visit to some friends in a neighbouring village.

She accepted his offer.

They were married in a month’s time, and she had for a husband a man with a considerable fortune, and, what was more, one who was kind-hearted, tender, and considerate.

He never repented marrying the poor dependent, who, though not so brilliant or handsome as Miss Golding, was an excellent wife, and never by her conduct or temper caused a jar in his house.

His married life was with her one long dream of bliss, for he had espoused a plain sensible woman who loved him and really studied his interest.

It may be imagined that Felice was desperately angry, as indeed she was ; but Septimus did his best to console her.

He showed her the letter Mr. Clayton had written him one evening after dinner, and said, ‘ They’re married

now, Feely; I heard so in the town to-day. Better forget him and have me, as I've asked you twenty times before.'

'I will have you, Septimus,' she cried with sudden energy, 'only you must revenge my wrongs. Ruin that man. Get him on the turf, can't you? Do something which will make him a beggar. Promise me that, and I will marry you in a week.'

'I'll try my best, Feely,' replied Septimus; 'that I promise you.'

He got up and kissed her. The compact was made. He was to ruin Mr. Clayton because he had slighted Felice, and on that understanding she took him.

Mr. Golding congratulated himself upon the lucky chance which had thrown the heiress into his arms. They were married in a month, and went abroad for a short time, after which they came back to England. Septimus followed the bent of his inclination by purchasing some yearlings and becoming an owner of racehorses. His luck, however, was not so good as his judgment. He knew a good horse when he saw it as well as any man, but he contrived to lose and spend much more money than he won.

At the end of three years Mrs. Clayton died in childbirth, and such was her husband's distress of mind at this untimely event, that he felt he must have something to divert his thoughts from the melancholy occurrence which had cast a blight over his life.

Always a keen sportsman, he followed the example of Mr. Golding and went on the turf. Success attended

all his ventures; he did not want money, he only cared for excitement—he obtained both. Such is usually the result, when a man has no object in gaining money. Fortune comes to those who do not want her. Since Emily's death he had no one to share his good luck with him, and as he paid cheques and notes into his bankers, he sighed with a disgust he could not repress.

When Felice heard that Mr. Clayton was engaged in racing and betting, she was much pleased.

‘He cannot know so much about it as you, Septimus,’ she said. ‘You must be his destruction, and go in for the sort of rivalry they say there was between a late celebrated marquis and another racing man.’

‘Leave him to me, and I'll get him cleared out in twelve months,’ replied Septimus confidently.

But, in spite of his boasting, he was unable to effect his purpose.

The more he ‘played,’ the worse it was for him, and five years after his appearance on the turf, he was posted at all the clubs as a defaulter.

As a matter of course—no joke—he could not appear at any race, as he did in the days of old, when he could bet his thousands and pay if he lost.

Honor Clayton had heard him say that he would ruin him. Although he felt sorry for Felice, when the contrary became manifest, he could not help feeling a sort of pleasure at the failure of his avowed rival.

Septimus was not a brave man, and when he found that his own money and Felice's large fortune

were swallowed up in an insatiable vortex, he became desperate and drank hard. This led to ill treatment of his wife, and she, one night after a dreadful scene, took refuge with Mr. Summers, her guardian, who, while blaming her for her folly in trusting such a man as Septimus Golding with her fortune, was too kind-hearted to refuse her an asylum.

Deserted by his wife, Septimus sank lower and lower. His credit was gone, and his friends were few.

Six years after Emu's triumph, when he had won largely, he determined to go to the Derby.

He dressed himself as well as he was able, and taking the train, went to Epsom. This was his first appearance on any race-course that year. Lincoln, Warwick, the Epsom Spring, Doncaster knew him not; and he flattered himself that those who knew him when he was prosperous would think that he had had a sudden and unexpected accession of wealth, and was prepared to fulfil his promises and liquidate his debts, whereas his only object was to snare the sovereigns and five-pound notes of the unwary, to gain the means of existence, as he had but a few shillings in his pocket, and nowhere to go for a fresh supply.

He paid to go into the ring, which was crowded; the policeman at the entrance did not know him, and he mingled with the crowd. Betting was brisk; and, as he stood with a book and pencil in hand, offering to lay the odds, having got into a comparatively quiet corner, he began to do a little business, and his spirits rose.

Most unexpectedly, when vociferating rather loudly, Mr. Honor Clayton came up, and looking him steadily in the face, said, 'You have no right here; you were knocked out last year and have not settled.'

At this accusation those who had betted with him began to look suspicious, and an ominous whisper of 'Welsher' ran round that part of the ring.

Septimus Golding became deadly pale.

'Why do you want to attack me?' he said in a plaintive voice.

'Because you are no longer fit to associate with gentlemen; you have not paid your debts of honour. Out of the ring, sir—out of the ring.'

A very stout man, with a rather red face, came up at this instant, book in hand. His name was Markham, and he was known as one of the Northern Levithans.

'What's the game?' he said.

'Simply this: I have ordered this man out of the ring,' replied Clayton.

'You know me, Markham,' exclaimed Golding, addressing the Yorkshireman, who was pitiless as a flint, as most Yorkshiremen are; 'we've made many a bet together, and you've had thousands out of me.'

'Fairly,' said the Yorkshireman; 'you owe me coin on outstanding bets now.'

'I say,' continued Mr. Clayton, 'that he has no right in the ring.'

'That's right, that is,' cried Markham, in a voice

hoarse with his exertions in laying the odds; 'and as time's valuable, if he won't go we'll put him out.'

'Give me a chance,' said Golding; 'for God's sake don't be so hard on me.'

'Time's valuable, I say; the bell will ring directly,' answered the Yorkshireman. 'No whining. Be off.'

Septimus did not attempt to move.

'O, you won't, won't you!' continued Markham. —'Lend me a hand, Mr. Clayton. So, no welshing here. Out of the ring—out of the ring! Run him out.'

And before Septimus could offer any resistance, the stout Yorkshireman had seized him by one arm, while Mr. Clayton grasped the other, and he was trotted gently to the railing, as the crowd made way as well as it could, Markham shouting loudly:

'Hi! welsher. Hi! make room there.'

And the crowd replied, with a vindictive hissing sound, 'Out of the ring with him—out of the ring!'

When the railing was reached, Markham took the unhappy man in his arms, and poising him in the air for a moment, threw him over.

He heard him fall with a dull thud on the ground, and turning his back, said, 'That was a good chuck, that! Yorkshire, that is. Who'll back the favourite? I'll give the odds: three to one bar one,' and his stentorian voice was heard above the surrounding din, just as if nothing had taken place to disturb his serenity.

Before Septimus had time to pick himself up, two policemen placed themselves on each side of him, and

with firmness, tempered with that gentleness and delicacy for which the force are famous, saw him off the course, protecting him from the angry demonstrations of the mob.

And so he went back to town without seeing the race, a sadder if not a wiser man.

Soon after his being kicked out of the ring we heard of him as a tout at Newmarket, having found a lucrative patron in a nobleman who was desirous of obtaining early and exclusive information.

He met his death in a year or two, and Felice was fortunate enough to marry again. Her misfortunes had made her less aristocratic in her ideas, and her husband was 'only a clerk,' as she would have once said. He was employed by Mr. Summers, and, being a clever fellow, augmented his income by judicious speculations on the stock exchange, on his own account.

This event, so desirable for Felice, was brought about by an accident which may be told in a few words, and which will serve as the epitaph of Septimus Golding: 'Died from the kick of a horse.'

A CHAPTER ON WELSHERS.

EVERY turf man knows what a 'gentleman from Wales' is; in other words, a Welsher. He may be described as a man who bets, and sometimes pays, if he wins, and always runs away if he loses. That is to say, he takes all the money that comes in his way, betting recklessly against the favourites; if one of them wins, he cannot settle; if a fielder turns up, he is all right, and can pay the few pounds he has lost over the outsider. He is generally a friend and companion of those who swindle the public by thimble-rigging and the three-card trick, both nearly extinguished now by the vigilance of the detective police. Racing has its parasites, and these fellows are among the most objectionable of the hangers-on to a noble pastime; though the milkers, the ropers, and the penmen, or those who scratch a horse without just cause, are equally to be reprobated. These men have a language of their own, an *argot*, which we have taken the trouble to collect and put into the shape of a vocabulary, which cannot fail to be interesting to sporting men, who are continually coming in contact, on race-courses, with those Ishmaelites; who, however, look out for yokels, Londoners, and those in their salad days, giving the noble sportsman, pure if not simple, a wide berth.

THE WELSHERS' VOCABULARY.

Boards	Cards.
Broad pitcher	A man playing the three cards.
Wroughter	The man who plays them.
Slop—Copper—Opparker	Policeman.
Cheese it.	Leave off.
Dlo namow	Old woman.
Red soup and slang	Gold watch and chain.
White soup and slang	Silver watch and chain.
Guy	Run away.
Stall your chevey	Turn your face—Get away.
Kady	Hat.
Kick	Pocket.
Nantie kertive	Broke—No money.
Grade	Money.
Toucherone-hog	Sixpence.
Bull	5s.
Half a bull	2s. 6d.
Dener	1s.
Duke	Fist.
Plant your dukes	Put up your fists.
Nangey pas—Yangez the } isgey }	I'll be hanged if I part any more.
I spy the hugmer with the } huffster }	Look at the man with the money.
Fawneys .	Rings.
Prop	Pin.
Rattler	Railroad.
Horney	{ The corner of a card when turned up.
Fake his kick	Pick his pocket.
Mush	Umbrella.
Bats	Boots.
Idquy	Sovereign.
Cly	Another term for pocket.
Sneak a peter	Steal a cash-box.
Mowey	Month.
Closh	Life-preserver.

Monerker	An address—false.
Snide	{ Not up to anything—Not worth much.
Stretch	Three months.
Lifer	For life.
In the stir or jug	In prison.
Juggins—Mug	A flat—One that is not fly.
Briefs.	Cards with name on.
Cop	To catch.
Copped	To be caught.
Joint	{ A list at the races—A wooden box.
Fin	A 5l. bank-note
Snide flimseys	False notes.
Culley	Pal—Friend.
Gun	Pickpocket.
Poke	Purse.
Jacks	Hanoverian sovereigns.
Bouncers	Men that sell purses.
The drum	{ Place of assignation : generally a public-house.
Douce a gamer	Twopence.
Graft	{ What does he do—What are his means of getting a living.
Gunning	Thieving.
Plays at the wood	Plays at skittles.
Plays at the green cloth	Billiards.
Sparks	Diamond rings.

EXAMPLES OF THE ABOVE.

‘My dlo namow’s copped a stretch for sneaking a Johnny Ryan.’ My old woman has got three months for stealing a flat iron.

‘I spy an opperker; guy, culley, guy.’ I see a policeman; run, pal, run.

‘The gun faked a poke.’ The pickpocket stole a purse.

‘Dlo namow,’ it will be seen, is simply ‘old woman’ with the letters transposed, and this is what is called back slang, extensively in vogue with sharpers and Welshers.

‘Ees taht sekolb niahc?’ though it looks like Syro-Chaldaic, or something worse, is nothing more than ‘See that bloke’s chain?’

When speaking of any one who is to be ‘done,’ they always style him ‘the bloke.’

A party which goes broad pitching or playing the three-card trick generally consists of five persons—as a rule, they are the lowest of the low, and can all use their fists, but they have generally one extra powerful fellow with them, who is known as the ugly man. The man who plays the cards is called the wroughtier. Another man is designated the crow, as his business is to keep a sharp look-out for the detectives, and the other two are known as stalls, whose business it is to keep the ‘flat’ in conversation, pretend to win or lose as the case may be—turn up the ‘horney’ or ‘put the smudge’ on, and condole and get the flat away. After he is cleared out, if he is obstreperous and strong and shows fight, the ugly man’s services are required, but they never, if they can avoid it, resort to his aid. Some of these broad pitchers are well educated; of course, these are the ‘tip toppers,’ who work the first-class carriages on railways; but, as we said before, the generality of them are the most awful set of scoundrels that it is possible to conceive out of Newgate. When the races are over

they go about the streets—‘street mugging,’ as they call it, which consists in picking up strangers from the country (they never attempt to swindle a townsman) and robbing them at skittles or by telling them they have had a lot of money left them, &c., &c., which is the old story so often seen in the papers.

Another lot of the same kidney are called bouncers ; these are the men who sell purses which are supposed to contain 2s. 6d. or more, which they sell for 6d., and when opened sometimes are the receptacles of half-pennies. They go in twos or threes, and when the bouncer is pursuing his calling the other two mix in the crowd and buy one of the purses which on this occasion contains some 7s. 6d. or 10s., which the buyer immediately shows in great confidence to the flattest ‘juggins’ he can get acquainted with. There is no need to say that all these blackguards have the most consummate impudence. The trick, simply slight of hand, we will attempt to describe. The operator holds a half-crown between his finger and thumb having a half-penny concealed in the palm of his hand at the same time ; he drops the 2s. 6d. in the purse so that there can be no possible mistake about that ; he then takes it out, and turning his hand holds it between his first and third finger, while by a dexterous movement which is only to be acquired by long practice he slips the half-penny underneath the 2s. 6d., but allows the half-crown to slip up his sleeve ; he then turns his hand open to the crowd and makes them believe he

threw the 2s. 6d. in, but in reality the half-penny is enclosed in the purse. A broad pitcher talks something after this fashion when he is manipulating the cards: 'Now then, gentlemen, here's the fairest game out—you have only to discover the picture which I try to hide; you have two eyes to see and I have two cards to hide the pretty picture, which I will bet any sportsman five, ten, fifteen, or twenty pounds he don't discover in the first card he raises—ready we are, who says done for a sovg.—a sovg.,' at the same time he holds up a sovereign. It is impossible for the card to be 'spotted' for certain even by the 'stalls,' unless the wroughtier has given them the 'office;' which when he discards the card is 'ready we are'—which might to the ring and the bystanders be construed into meaning 'ready we are to bet.' or by a look either right, left, or the middle. The stalls, who have had one eye on the flat and the other on the cards, nudge the flat and try and put him on to the wrong one; but should he, by accident, spot the right one and attempt to pick it up, the other stall would be too quick for him and would himself pick it up, upon which the wroughtier would exclaim, 'No, gentlemen, that's not fair, I cannot play with two.' In fact, you cannot win at it. The cards are there—there is no mistake about that, but the eye is easily deceived.

When the cards are 'discarded' or thrown out, the 'horney' is done in this way: when the wroughtier is playing the cards, he suddenly turns his head on one side, and pretends to blow his nose or be inattentive for

a moment—one of the ‘stalls’ at the instant he turns his head catches hold of the picture-card and turns the top right-hand corner up. The wroughtier takes not the slightest notice, but goes on with his manipulation; but on taking the cards up he dexterously turns down the corner of the picture-card, and, at the same instant, with his little finger, raises the corner of the other card which was ‘horned’ while he was not looking. The flat having seen the corner turned up generally bites and is ‘done.’

There is also the ‘smudge dodge,’ but that is limited to ‘professors’ of the highest class, as it is extremely difficult to do.

We now come back to the subject of this chapter, which is Welshers. These gentlemen are horse-copers, broad-pitchers, and bouncers mixed; in fact, they are generally either one or the other. At all great meetings Welshers are as plentiful as blackberries, and their dodges are as numerous as themselves. The game is now nearly played out, as the march of intellect and the penny press, without taking into question the gentlemen who have been done and have told their friends, have made people pretty wide-awake on a race-course. As a rule all good genuine list-men are to be found in the booths nearest the ring—the said booths being kept by men well known, such as Alec Keene, &c., who for their own sake would not let a ‘joint’ be put up in their booths if the parties were not going to act ‘on the square.’ But as one strolls down a race-course one comes upon

booths erected by goodness knows who, and also lists propped upon three sticks and covered over with green baize. More than likely they will have the name of some well-known racing firm on them. Of such beware; their real name, as they would say themselves, is, 'Do 'em,' and they belong to the great firm of 'Guy, Bolt, and Co.' They go in twos and threes, and if they cannot get a joint at one of the booths, through not having money enough to pay for one, or if they have not brought a portable stand with them, they try and jump, or creep, or by some means or another get into the ring. Since Inspector Tanner has had the superintendence of the rings at all large meetings—such as Epsom, Ascot, Goodwood, &c.—those gentlemen, who are as well known to the regular *bonâ-fide* betting men as the dome of St. Paul's is to a cockney, generally find that they receive a pretty quick hint to make themselves scarce, which they are sensible enough to do. Sometimes at small country meetings they actually have the impudence to pass themselves off as detectives; and when one or two have done so successfully, it is not very long before the ring is pretty well stocked with their brethren.

There is no doubt that racing affords a questionable means of living to quite a small army of ruffians, whom it is next to impossible to improve off the face of the course. We have no pet theory of our own as regards their extinction; we have merely dealt with them as they are, and tried to give our readers some insight into the habits, customs, and language of these peculiar people.

THE BEST THREE-YEAR OLD.

‘As is usually the case immediately after the decision of a great event, but little disposition was evinced to proceed with speculation. The following quotations on the Portland Plate comprise the whole of the evening’s business, the sums invested not being of sufficient importance to call for special comment. Closing prices :

PORTLAND PLATE.

100 to 12	agst	Plaudit (t & off).
10 to 1	—	Thor (t & off).
100 to 6	—	Argyle (t & off).
20 to 1	—	Cardinal York (t & off).
20 to 1	—	Lictor (t and off).
20 to 1	—	Laird of Scotland (t & off).
20 to 1	—	Bosworth (t & off).
25 to 1	—	Minnie Warren (t & off).’

So read the Marquis Glendour as he sat in the reading-room at Bartlett’s, his favourite club, the day after the Doncaster St. Leger, which was splendidly won by Pero Gomez.

Glendour had married Isabel, the only daughter of the Countess Buchanan, and it is not too much to say that by his conduct he had in a few years made her life as wretched and miserable as her bitterest enemy could wish. He often said he loved the worst horse that ever was foaled fifty times better than he did the finest woman that ever was born.

They were shockingly badly matched, and had not a single taste in common. Isabel was refined, fond of music, poetry, and the fine arts, while he was never happy off a race-course or out of a stable.

In time his fortune suffered.

Isabel had quarrelled with her mother and her friends when she married Glendour, whom they did not like, and she was isolated.

Scarcely had the Marquis Glendour finished reading the extract with which we began this tale, than he saw his friend Edward Leslie, a captain in a foot regiment with whom he had been playing rather high lately and betting very largely. Captain Leslie had won over the Spaniard, against which horse Glendour had made a dead set, pencilling him till he did not like the look of his book at all, owing to the victory of Pero.

Glendour was seriously embarrassed. Up to the time of his meeting with Leslie, he had been comparatively cautious; but after that unfortunate introduction, he became totally altered, plunging into all sorts of excesses, and indulging in every species of fashionable dissipation.

Soon after they met they adjourned to a room which blazed with light; tables for card-playing were placed at convenient distances from one another, for high play was the order of the day at Bartlett's, as it is now at more than one fashionable London club.

Edward Leslie's face wore a triumphant expression; he was determined that this night should witness the

completion of Glendour's ruin, if possible. The Marquis looked pale and haggard; years of dissipation will tell a tale, let the man who professes to enjoy it be as strong as Hercules.

‘You look a little hipped, Marquis,’ exclaimed Leslie.

‘The least bit *ennuyé*,’ answered Glendour, fabricating a smile.

‘Have you dined?’

‘I have eaten. I never dine now; my appetite seems to have left me.’

‘Have some Moselle. If you cannot eat, you can at least drink.’

The Marquis Glendour signified his assent, and the wine was ordered.

‘Were you at Doncaster?’ asked the Marquis.

‘Yes: splendid race. It was run in three minutes twenty-one and a half seconds by Benson’s chronograph. Why were you absent? Why were you not there?’ answered Leslie.

‘My wife was not very well. The fact is, we are always roving now, and I could not get away. I lost heavily, though I ought to have known that Pero was dangerous. Only think of what he has done!’ said Glendour, who had the performance of all the cracks at his fingers’ ends. ‘He’s got the Beadsman blood in him. In 1868 he won the Middle Park Plate at Newmarket Second October Meeting, carrying 8st. 6lb. by half-a-length, beating Scottish Queen, second; Pretender, third. At Newmarket Houghton Meeting walked over for the

Criterion Stakes, carrying 8st. 12lb. after a dead-heat with Wild Oats, the stakes being divided. These were the only races for which he was brought out as a two-year old. In 1869, at Newmarket Craven Meeting, won Newmarket Three-year-old Biennial by a neck from Duke of Beaufort, Ryshworth being third, three lengths behind Mr. Brayley's colt; Tenedos fourth, Amazon fifth, and Cicely sixth. At Epsom was second for the Derby, beaten by a head by Pretender, the Drummer finishing third, a length from Pero Gomez. At Ascot, carrying 9st. 11lb., was second for Prince of Wales's Stakes, won by Martyrdom by a length and a half. Same meeting won Ascot Derby Stakes, beating Consul by a length, Good Hope being a bad third, and Scottish Queen fourth and last. And yet I was fool enough to go against him.'

'Do you know on what course a mile-and-three-quarters race would be run at Goodwood? I have a bet on it,' said Leslie, who knew that Glendour was always lively when talking about racing.

'Yes, the Cup Course,' replied the Marquis. 'There are the Orange, the Cup, T.Y.C., Queen's Plate and Craven Courses; and for the Orange Course, the horses start at the Orange post on the Queen's Plate Course, and run the Maidstone Course, a little short of three miles. The Cup Course, the horses start at the Cup post, go out to the westward of the Clump, and turn to the eastward of the Clump; two miles and a half. T.Y.C. is the straight three-quarters of a mile upon

which all T.Y.C. races are to be run, unless specified to the contrary. Half a mile is the last half-mile of T.Y.C. For the Queen's Plate Course, the horses start at the Charlton Down to the north-west of the stand, run over to the east of the Clump, go to the outside circle of the hill, and return to the east of the Clump; about three miles and five furlongs. For one mile, the horses to start at the mile post, and run home to the westward of the Clump. For once round, the horses to start at the winning-post, go out to the westward of the Clump, and return the same way. One mile and a half, one mile and three-quarters, and two miles are to be run upon the Cup Course. The Craven Course, one mile and a quarter. These things want a little study, but I know every course in England.'

While talking Glendour drank greedily, and the effect of his potations was soon apparent. He became very reckless, and when he saw Leslie handling a pack of cards, he challenged him to play.

'As you like,' returned Leslie carelessly.

They sat down opposite one another, and soon became the centre of a knot of spectators. The luck was with Leslie, and he won largely. Undismayed by his heavy losses, the Marquis Glendour wished to double the stakes; but Leslie refused.

'To-morrow will do as well,' he said. 'I do not want to take undue advantage of my luck, which is in the ascendant. There are many gentlemen standing around us; play with one of them.'

Acting upon this advice, Glendour soon found an opponent ready and willing to undertake an encounter with him.

There was a fatality about the cards that night. He could not win. At seven o'clock he rose from the table, wearied utterly in mind and body. A pile of gold, notes, and acceptances lay before his adversary.

Glendour feared that he was more than a beggar, because he would be a defaulter.

He had lost everything, and, until he went into his accounts, he knew not if he had the wherewithal to satisfy his debts of honour.

His losses had sobered him to some extent, though he was labouring under great mental and cerebral excitement when he returned to the hotel at which he stopped while in London.

He found Isabel asleep, but he did not scruple to awake her.

'Why should she sleep,' he said, 'when I can have no rest?'

'What is it?' asked Isabel, rubbing her eyes with the back of her hand, and scarcely knowing who stood before her.

'It is I, Glendour—your husband,' he replied; 'I am a ruined man.'

'Ruined!'

'Yes, irretrievably. I haven't a halfpenny to call my own. At last my folly and infatuation have culminated in beggary.'

‘What shall you do?’ asked Isabel.

‘Blow my brains out. Don’t start; it is as likely as not,’ he answered with a reckless laugh.

Isabel did not appear horrified at this threat. There was a glimmer of hope in the distance. She seemed to see her way out of the house of bondage.

‘At all events,’ continued her husband, ‘we must leave here in a short time. I have no money to pay our bills, and—’

‘You can go your way,’ said Isabel with a frigid air, ‘and I will go mine. We have an opportunity of parting amicably; let us do so.’

‘Why should we part?’ he asked.

‘When you were rich, I could not love you,’ she replied; ‘and I am positive my repugnance would increase in poverty.’

‘I—I think I could make an effort with you, Isa,’ he stammered.

‘You must make one without me,’ she said coldly; ‘apply to your relations, they will get you some appointment abroad; or, if that fails you, keep on the turf—it is the paradise of poor noblemen; or advertise my death in the papers and marry the widow of a rich City man. I will do nothing to spoil your prospects.’

He sat down in a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

‘I suppose you are right, Isabel,’ exclaimed the Marquis Glendour; ‘we must separate. Your mother will care for you, and that removes one weight from my

mind. I have been a fool, and must pay the penalty of my folly. If it is possible to snatch anything out of the fire, and to recover my lost position, I will seek you out again and endeavour to behave better to you.'

Isabel busied herself with packing up a few books and papers, appearing utterly indifferent to the man's evident distress.

'You will take care of our child, Isabel?' he continued.

'Yes,' she answered very coldly.

'Remember he is the heir to my title and—I was going to say estates.'

'The heir presumptive to the title of Glendour shall be well tended,' she said sarcastically.

'Let us walk out together,' he added; 'I have no means to pay our bill here, which must be rather heavy. To try to take our clothes and effects away is out of the question. I believe I have a couple of sovereigns; one will take you to your mother's.'

'Thank you, I have enough for my wants.'

Retiring to her bedroom, she stayed away about ten minutes, returning plainly dressed, wearing some jewelry, and carrying her child, the only issue of their marriage, in her arms.

Glendour gave her his arm, and they left the hotel together.

He imagined that she would get a cab, and drive to the Countess Buchanan's. As for himself, he did not know exactly what he should do. At length Isabel exclaimed:

‘Here we are at the corner of the street; let us separate. Good-bye.’

‘Is that all you have to say? Well, good-bye. I will go into some tavern, and drink to our next meeting.’

Isabel shook her head sadly.

‘I have no wish to meet you again,’ she said; and allowing him to grasp her hand, without any responsive movement on her part, she pulled her veil over her face and walked quickly away.

She had a little money, and her intention was to take a lodging in a cheap but respectable locality.

Difficulties, however, beset her. Landladies as a rule are a suspicious class, and when they saw a lady with a baby in her arms—the lady being unwilling or unable to give a reference, and calling herself a widow—some slammed the door in her face, others said they were full, and others, again, demanded an exorbitant rent.

She walked about until she felt so tired that she could have sat down on the first doorstep and gone to sleep.

Unaccustomed to carry her own child, it weighed heavily upon her strength, wearied her arms, and felt like a lump of lead.

At length she reached a small street which had the merit of looking very clean. The houses were two-storied ones. Most of them had little bills staring out of the windows, informing the houseless wanderer that apartments furnished were to be had within.

Isabel walked half-way down the street, and knocked at a door, which was opened by a tall woman who had once been good-looking, but upon whose features time had made some ravages.

‘You can see the rooms,’ she said, in answer to Isabel’s inquiry. ‘But perhaps one would be enough for you. Where is your husband, and at what does he work?’

‘We are separated,’ replied Isabel. ‘I shall be quite by myself.’

‘And that is your child?’

‘Yes.’

‘You can give me a reference, I suppose?’

Isabel produced her purse, and handed the woman a sovereign, saying :

‘That is all I can give you to satisfy your scruples. Either let me come in at once, or say you don’t want me for an inmate of your house, and I will go elsewhere.’

The sight of the money mollified the woman, and she led the way into the parlour, apologising for her suspicious questions.

In half an hour Isabel found herself sitting before a cheerful fire, which was the more agreeable as approaching winter had brought icy-cold weather with it.

After ministering to her child’s wants and her own, she went out to purchase a few articles of wearing apparel which she had been unable to bring with her.

When she had time for reflection, she began to

think she had acted rashly, if not harshly. At all times she had been dreadfully impulsive, but, as the days wore on, she examined her heart, and she found that she did love her worthless husband.

To her mother she would not return.

She might have comforted Glendour in his last great and crowning misfortune, but she had behaved coldly and cruelly. It is true that she had had all her finest feelings outraged by him ; still he was her husband.

With the proverbial tendency of a woman to change her mind, she longed to meet him again in less than a week after she had left him. She yet loved him. Her conduct was one of the mysteries of a woman's heart.

She could gain no intelligence of Glendour, who, she was told, had gone abroad. Nevertheless she went out every day, and wandered curiously up and down West-end thoroughfares in the hope and expectation of seeing him.

But she met him not.

Returning home weary and footsore, she would peer listlessly into the fire, and watch the fantastic shapes visible in the glowing coals.

December came with its frosts and its snows. The ground was covered with a white mantle.

Isabel had spent all the money she had, and necessity had obliged her to part with the jewelry that once adorned her person.

Even her dresses were sold, and she was compelled

to pawn everything she had to obtain the bare necessities of life.

What a change for the once elegant Marchioness Glendour!

Her landlady was a harsh woman, who, seeing no chance of obtaining any money from her lodger, gave her notice to quit.

In vain Isabel protested against the barbarity of such treatment.

Where was she to go? what was she to do? It is true that a letter addressed to the Countess Buchanan would have obtained her money and forgiveness; but her pride would not permit her to write to her mother.

One afternoon she found herself forcibly ejected from the house in which she had found a temporary home.

She carried her child in her arms.

The snow lay thick upon the ground; the nipping frost had made it hard and crisp. A keen biting easterly wind tore up the streets, and whirled small sharp-cutting particles of snow into the faces of pedestrians.

Isabel shuddered as she pulled her scanty clothing more closely around her, and tried to screen her wailing infant from the cruel wind.

She wandered mechanically into Piccadilly, and walked up and down before the club-houses. Many gentlemen, thinking she was begging, and being moved

to compassion by the extremity of the weather, commiserated her sufferings and offered her money.

The halfpence and the silver fell from her half-frozen fingers on to the pavement.

She would have none of it.

Alms she wanted not. Probably death would come before the morning. Death for herself, death for her child! Happy oblivion for both.

She stood outside a large building which was brilliantly lighted. The sound of mirth and revelry reached her ears.

Was it fancy, or did she at intervals hear a voice which was but too familiar to her?

Fascinated, she hung about the house, which was no other than Bartlett's.

It was midnight.

A shivering woman leant against a lamp-post, as a gentleman, flushed with wine, elegantly dressed, emerged from the club, and stood a moment on the steps while he pulled his coat over his breast.

Isabel uttered a cry.

The gentleman passed her.

She ran after him, and, clutching him eagerly by the arm, cried in accents of the wildest joy, 'Horace, Horace! do you not know me? 'Tis I, Isabel, your wife! Isabel, whom you used to love so fondly and call your darling angel!'

The Marquis Glendour—for it was he—started slightly, but instantly recovering his serenity, looked

coldly at the miserably clad woman who was beseeching his protection.

‘I do not recognise you,’ he said.

‘Am I so much altered?’ Isabel said, while her tears fell fast.

‘To me you became as one dead,’ he continued, ‘when you left me in my distress. You loved me not.’

Isabel cowered before him.

There was so much concentrated hatred in his tone that her heart sank within her, and she began to fear that, in hoping for his forgiveness, and a consequent reconciliation, she had been cherishing a phantom.

‘O Horace,’ she cried frantically, ‘you must not, shall not, leave me thus! You can afford to be magnanimous, and forgive a wretched woman whose only faults have been her pride and temper.’

‘Go!’ exclaimed Horace relentlessly.

‘You bid me depart from you on a night like this? O, by the memory of the past, I conjure you to have mercy! For weeks I have been wandering about in search of you, feeling sure you would pity my distress, and take me back into your heart.’

‘I will have nothing to say to you,’ answered Glen-dour resolutely. ‘Every tie that once existed between us is severed.’

‘I shall die before morning,’ cried Isabel plaintively. ‘He knows I shall die, and he will not save my life!’

‘It is fitting and proper that such traitresses should die,’ he exclaimed.

‘But my child — *your* child? I may have done wrong—he?’

Said the Marquis, interrupting her, ‘Go, both of you!’

‘O my God!’ said Isabel, ‘he is leaving me.’

Glendour had indeed gone a few paces, but he apparently changed his mind and returned.

‘If,’ he said, ‘you wish for money, I will freely give it you.’

Putting his hand in his waistcoat-pocket, he drew forth gold, and handing it to her exclaimed:

‘This is a charitable donation to the Marchioness Glendour!’

The cutting sarcasm of this speech was utterly lost upon Isabel.

Seeing that there was no love to be obtained from him, no paradise to be regained, but only a paradise utterly and irretrievably lost, and given up to the dominion of a hideous snake, she felt a new spirit spring up within her.

Yes.

Cold, wretched, hungry as she was, that pride of which her mother boasted, and which must have been only slumbering within her, awoke.

She would have none of his charity.

‘Take back your gold!’ she cried; ‘it was not money, but love, I wanted from you. Heaven knows

you have blighted the life and crushed the affection of a woman who would have loved you once more tenderly than ever you deserved. But no matter. Your words have stirred up that within my breast which will in time prove to you that I am not the weak and silly creature you take me to be. I can see that it is not the lambs who inherit this world, but the lions; with the latter will I class myself. If you have lived for revenge—'

'And enjoyed it,' he interpolated.

'If you have lived for revenge, *and enjoyed it*,' she went on, accepting his interpellation, 'so will I.'

The Marquis Glendour looked contemptuously at her, as if he wondered what a poor, ruined, heart-broken thing like herself could do.

'You don't believe me!' she exclaimed, noticing the incredulous expression of his face, which was made dimly visible by the sickly glare of the gas-lamps.

'I don't,' he answered; 'and if ever you do me the slightest harm, I will freely forgive you. Now go; I can waste no more time over you. Stay. I may as well inform you that I am not a blackleg on the turf, as you kindly predicted. I have money again.'

With this parting shot Glendour turned carelessly on his heel and walked away.

Scarcely had he gone before a policeman approached Isabel, and after regarding her suspiciously for a few moments, exclaimed, 'Now then, mother, move on. I can't have you sort of characters loitering about here.'

‘If you please, will you direct me to the nearest workhouse?’ she said.

‘O, that’s your game, is it? Didn’t you get nothing out of that swell I saw you talking to?’

‘Nothing; it was not my intention to do so. Will you please give me the information I require, or shall I apply to some one else?’

‘You’re mighty particular for a female casual,’ cried the constable; ‘but I don’t mind telling you that Mount-street is the nearest workhouse, though I doubt whether the casual ward is not full by this time, and on such a night as this.’

‘Thank you; I’ll take my chance,’ said Isabel.

Away she went, as well as her trembling limbs would allow her.

The interview which had just taken place between her and her husband had made her imbibe a sudden resolution to live.

He had taunted her; he had gloated over her misery. Well, she would gloat over his wretchedness and taunt him.

She found the workhouse in Mount-street, Grosvenor-square. Abject poverty jostled magnificent luxury. Life is made up of contrasts.

They took her and her child in. The Marchioness Glendour underwent the horrors of a London workhouse in the middle of winter.

The next morning she went back to the lodgings she had lately left, and had an interview with the landlady,

who would not allow her to come into the house, but stood with the door in her hand talking to her.

‘Have you brought me my rent?’ was the woman’s first question.

‘No; but I have come to tell you how to get it,’ answered Isabel.

‘How?’

‘Allow me to write a letter to a lady; you can take it yourself; and I will guarantee a reply accompanied by money.’

‘Who is the lady?’

‘The Countess Mirabel Bucanan.’

‘Where does she live?’

‘Carlton-gardens, Pall-mall.’

‘I shall take no begging-letters,’ exclaimed the woman. ‘How do I know I sha’n’t get kicked out of such a fine house? What is the Countess Bucanan to such trumpery as you?’

‘She is my mother,’ answered Isabel quietly.

‘What! are you in earnest?’ cried the landlady in astonishment.

‘Perfectly so.’

‘And who are you?’

‘I am the Marchioness Isabel Glendour. Events took place last night which have produced a complete revolution in my mind. I have quarrelled with all my friends, and estranged myself from them; but I have only to write, as I tell you, and obtain not only forgiveness but money. Stand on one side, my good woman,

and allow me to enter. Depend upon it, you will find your account in being civil to me.'

The woman, utterly astounded and unable to believe Isabel, nevertheless moved on one side.

Isabel went into the sitting-room, handed the baby to her landlady, and sitting down at the table began to write a note in an elegant and ladylike hand.

'MY DEAR MOTHER,' she wrote, 'now that Glendour is ruined, I see the utter folly of which I have been guilty. I hear that he is gambling on the turf.

'I wish now to be *revenged* upon him. It matters not why. I declare the fact. I am in want. Send me some money by the bearer of this letter, and I will come to you promptly to devise means to vindicate the honour of my family, of which I am as jealous as yourself.

'Your penitent and affectionate

'ISABEL.'

'There, Mrs. Russell,' exclaimed Isabel, as she folded up the letter, incased it in an envelope, and handed it to her landlady, 'take that, if you please, at once to Carlton-gardens.'

Mrs. Russell was in a mist; she scarcely knew what she was saying or doing.

'Fancy having a real live marchioness in my house!' she muttered. 'But no; I can't and won't believe it.'

Descending into the kitchen, she opened the letter, by placing the adhesive over some hot water, and read it.

The contents certainly bore out part of Isabel's statement.

She went to Carlton-gardens. The epistle was sent up to the countess, who gave Mrs. Russell, with her own hands, a reply, with which she hastened home.

Isabel was anxiously awaiting her return.

'Here is a letter for you, my dear,' exclaimed Mrs. Russell.

Isabel took it eagerly, tore it open, and found ten five-pound notes and a slip of paper, upon which was written :

'Let me see you as soon as possible. M. B.'

'What do I owe you, Mrs. Russell?' inquired Isabel.

'Near upon one pound fifteen, miss,—that is, ma'am, —I mean, my lady,' stammered Mrs. Russell.

'Take this five-pound note. Never mind the change; you have done me a service; you may keep it.'

Overpowered by this generosity, Mrs. Russell burst into tears, and exclaimed :

'If I'd a-thought you'd been what you are, O, good Lord, how different I'd have acted !'

'There, that will do,' exclaimed Isabel; 'take the money and call a cab.'

The Countess Buchanan gladly took her child to her heart; she found peace if not happiness in her mother's palatial mansion.

Glendour's affairs were not, after all, in such a bad state as he had imagined. He mortgaged his property

and paid all his debts, having a little money left to go on with, and as he had never made default at Tattersall's, or been warned off the heath at Newmarket, every one was willing to bet with him, and his word was freely taken by those who cannot be induced to believe that a peer of the realm can ever be without money, or at least without influential friends to lend it him.

Divorced from the baleful society of Captain Leslie, his affairs seemed to prosper.

He won money.

At length he bought a horse, which was very successful, and people began to look upon him as a flourishing man.

The Duke de St. Casse, an owner of race-horses and a foreigner of distinction, finding that, owing to an ignorance of many of our insular habits and customs, he was frequently imposed upon, felt the want of an agent in whom he could place confidence.

Every one spoke highly of the Marquis Glendour; and as it was imperative that his agent should be a gentleman, the duke thought seriously of making overtures to Glendour.

He met him at the Epsom Spring Meeting just as turf-affairs were beginning to brighten.

Touching him on the shoulder, he exclaimed:

'Pardon me, marquis; but I have a word or two to say to you.'

'Certainly,' answered Glendour.

'I am sadly in want of an agent over here; and I

could afford to give a gentleman who would serve me in that respect a salary of three thousand a year, and by attending to my interests, and running my horses to the best advantage, he might win very large sums.'

Glendour reflected.

'Is that an indirect offer to me?' he asked.

'Suppose I admit it?'

'If so, I accept it,' was the ready reply.

The Duke de St. Casse extended his hand, which met Glendour's in a hearty grasp.

The compact was ratified.

From that day the Marquis Glendour was the accredited agent of the Duke de St. Casse.

The duke had a horse entered for the Derby which was first favourite for the Two Thousand Guineas.

It was supposed to be the best three-year old of the day, and it was confidently believed that Sheet-anchor would win both events.

Glendour's whole time and attention was taken up in looking after this horse.

He had heard rumours abroad that the touts and other ruffians who infest all training-quarters would make an attempt upon this horse.

His utmost vigilance, together with that of Nat Braham the trainer, and Joe Topper the stable-lad, was daily and even nightly required.

There was a man of the name of Shardloes who had once been a great man at every race-course.

He had been known as the Southern Leviathan, but

after one Derby he stood to lose a vast amount. Preferring to keep what money he had to disbursing it honourably and beginning again, he levanted.

While abroad his passion for speculation haunted him, and he could only find peace at the continental gambling-saloons.

Here in less than twelve months he lost every penny he possessed in the world.

Reduced to the last extremity, he was compelled to return to England, and to the intense surprise of everybody Tommy Shardloes' face was once more seen on a race-course.

There had been a charm about his name once, but that charm had vanished.

Some admired him for his audacity in returning; others openly called him what he was—a thief.

Tommy Shardloes would have resented this language in his Leviathan days, but, being without money, he was forced to put up with it.

The rich may resent insults; the poor must bear them.

He made a few bets now and then, and gradually, by dint of cleverness and careful study, made a little money.

But he awoke one morning with the painful consciousness of having laid very heavily against Sheet-anchor, who had been placed at the top of the betting.

‘This horse must not win,’ he muttered. ‘If he does, I’m a ruined man again.’

The question was, how to prevent his winning.

Tommy Shardloes put on his thinking-cap, and some hours afterwards might have been seen crossing Newmarket heath in the direction of the Duke de St. Casse's training-quarters, where he felt tolerably sure of meeting Glendour.

The marquis was standing outside the stables. Sheet-anchor had just returned from his morning gallop.

He looked the perfection of a race-horse: his coat was silken and glossy. By his side stood the stable-lad and the trainer.

The Marquis Glendour was patting his neck.

'Morning, my lord,' exclaimed Shardloes. 'Been giving the horse a pipe-opener?'

'Yes, it would appear so,' replied Glendour rather stiffly.

'Safe to win, I suppose?'

'Upon that point you must use your own discretion,' returned the marquis. 'If you have come here touting, like the rest of them, you will gain no information from me.'

'I'm no tout, my lord, as you know,' answered the man. 'No; Tommy Shardloes has not sunk quite so low as that yet.'

'Well, I know nothing of you, and do not wish to hold any conversation with you.'

'As you please, my lord. Perhaps the day will come when you can't help yourself,' said Shardloes.

These were random words. Tommy Shardloes himself did not attach any particular meaning to them, nor did he know exactly why he had used them.

They were, however, fulfilled in a most remarkable manner.

The time did come when the Marquis Glendour could not help holding a conversation with Tommy Shardloes.

When Captain Leslie thought that the marquis was thoroughly ruined, he fancied he would blow his brains out, feeling certain that he would never rise any more.

But in the course of time he received news that Glendour was rising.

His agents told him that he had received help and countenance from the Duke de St. Casse.

During the time that Leslie and Glendour were engaged in gambling, the former got very many acceptances of the latter into his possession; among these were several notes-of-hand for large amounts.

Looking over his papers he found seven I O U's for 1000*l.* apiece.

These were signed Horace Glendour.

Putting them in his pocket, he started for Newmarket, where he heard his victim was to be found.

Some explanation may be required here; it will be asked, why did not Edward Leslie make use of these notes-of-hand before?

The answer is simple. What use would it have been

to present them for payment when he thought Glendour was utterly ruined ?

Leslie had kept them by him for the off-chance of the marquis making his way in the world again.

When he arrived at Newmarket, he went to the principal hotel.

Taking a place in the coffee-room, he sat down and looked about him. He ordered some soda and brandy, which a waiter brought him.

Scarcely had he been in the room five minutes when a man entered, and, scowling at the waiter, called for some brandy and cold water.

This man was Tommy Shardloes, and he sat down opposite Captain Leslie.

An hour before he had been snubbed by the Marquis Glendour.

The slight to which he had been subjected still rankled in his mind.

‘Curse him!’ he said aloud ; ‘what was he a year ago ?—broken-down, as bad as I am now nearly. A fine peer of the realm ! But I’ll be one with the Marquis Glendour.’

As this name fell upon Edward Leslie’s ears, he regarded his neighbour with some attention.

‘A very praiseworthy determination, my friend !’ he exclaimed.

‘What’s it to you !’ retorted Tommy Shardloes sharply.

‘More than you think for.’

‘Eh ?’

‘The Marquis Glendour has insulted you.’

‘Yes; d— him!’

‘Would you like to be revenged?’

‘Will a duck swim?’ replied Shardloes.

‘I think it is in my power to assist you,’ said Leslie; ‘but first of all tell me your name.’

‘Here’s my card. I either take or lay the odds, but I won’t write Sheet-anchor any more. I’ve gone in hot enough over him already.’

‘Is that St. Casse’s horse?’

‘Yes; the duke’s.’

‘Meet me here to-morrow, at ten o’clock, Mr. Shardloes,’ said Edward Leslie.

The man agreed to do so; and during the interval Leslie made inquiries about him.

When the morrow came, he was perfectly ready to talk to him.

‘I find, Mr. Shardloes,’ he began, ‘that your reputation is not the brightest in the world.’

‘What the devil has my reputation got to do with the business we have in hand?’ cried Shardloes.

‘Everything. I wish you to understand that I know you to be a man with a shadow—that is to say, under a cloud. Don’t interrupt me. You wish to be revenged upon Glendour?’

‘I do.’

‘Look at those;’ as he spoke he spread five of the I O U’s out upon the table. ‘What do you think of them?’ he added.

‘They’re right enough. I know his fist.’

‘Very well ; take them and get the money for me. You shall have ten per cent for your trouble.’

‘Do you mean it ?’

‘Of course,’ answered Leslie.

‘That’ll stump him. He hasn’t the money, and the duke’s shaky. If Sheet-anchor doesn’t win the Two Thousand and the Derby, the duke will be nowhere.’

‘Very well. I give you a week. At the expiration of that time I shall expect to meet you here again, or—’

‘Don’t worry yourself, Captain,’ said Tommy Shardloes ; ‘I’m your man.’

They separated.

Mr. Shardloes lost no time in again thrusting himself upon the notice of the Marquis Glendour.

This time he met him in Newmarket, at the bar of the hotel in which he was stopping.

Glendour, like most sporting-men, could drink deeply, and he was standing at the bar with a few friends, indulging in the delectable pastime of ‘tossing’ for champagne.

‘Morning, my lord,’ said Shardloes, accosting Glendour with his usual salutation.

Glendour turned his back upon him.

‘How’s Sheet-anchor?’ continued Shardloes ; ‘mean to run him on the square, my lord?’

‘Look here, my good fellow,’ cried Glendour, wheeling round and regarding him angrily, ‘I am not in the

habit of being badgered by fellows of your calibre. I don't know you, and I don't want to know you.'

'Sure to win, my lord?'

'Sheer off,' exclaimed Glendour, 'or I won't answer for the consequences.'

'Take a fool's advice, my lord, and don't do anything rash. It would be more to your credit to take up your acceptances.'

'What do you mean?'

'Your I O U's, my lord—plenty of them about.'

'Insolent scoundrel, you haven't any of them!'

'Don't know that, my lord.'

Glendour regarded him with a stare of astonishment.

Surely the man would not be so pertinaciously impudent if he had not something to go upon.

Shardloes felt in his pocket, and taking out a small parcel displayed one piece of paper on the counter.

It contained in Glendour's handwriting:

'London, October 15th, 1869.

'To Captain Leslie,—IOU one thousand pounds.

'1000*l*.

HORACE GLENDOUR.'

'Where did you get this?' asked the marquis, while a huskiness arose in his throat which seriously impeded his utterance.

'From the gentleman to whom it is addressed.'

'Captain Leslie!'

'Surely your lordship can read?'

'Have you any more of them?'

'A hatful.'

‘Come here. I—I want to talk to you,’ exclaimed Glendour, recovering himself.

He drew Shardloes on one side, apologising to his friends for his temporary absence.

They went into the gardens attached to the hotel, and sat down in an arbour.

‘I should like to drink at your lordship’s expense,’ said Shardloes; ‘fellows like myself have an awkward knack of getting thirsty.’

‘Order what you like, but tell me where you got this document,’ replied Glendour.

‘From Captain Leslie, and I’ve a lot more; but I present them one at a time, so as not to embarrass your lordship. I don’t want to sew you up.’

‘It is impossible that I can meet them,’ said Glendour, as if talking to himself. ‘I thought that all my notes-of-hand held by Leslie had been paid. God knows he had money enough out of me.’

‘Your lordship did not condescend to answer my question about Sheet-anchor,’ exclaimed Shardloes. ‘Shall I tell you what I was thinking?’

‘If you like.’

‘Now just suppose Sheet-anchor was to lose the Two Thousand. They’ve made him a hot favourite, and are betting twos to one on him. Why, we should get him at five or six to one for the Derby! Only think of that, my lord! what fortunes we might make!’

‘You vile scoundrel,’ cried Glendour, ‘I’ve a good mind to kick you for your—’

‘Least said soonest mended, my lord,’ interrupted Shardloes. ‘It was only a suggestion of mine. The race won’t be run for ten days yet ; I’ll give you five of them to think over my proposition.’

‘Let me clearly understand it.’

‘I’ve hinted plain enough.’

‘Is this what you mean ? If Sheet-anchor loses the race, you will not mention the bills again.’

‘Exactly. I’ll lose them, or give them up to you ; but if he is to run to win, I shall want 5000*l.* of you next Monday.’

‘Very well ; let it rest, then. I’ll see you again on that day.’

‘And give me an answer ?’

‘Yes,’ replied Glendour, who was strangely agitated.

A fatality seemed to pursue him. To be compelled to pay such a large amount of money was utter ruin. He fancied he was clear of all encumbrances, and that he was once more on the road to fortune and distinction.

He had cherished a delusion, and followed a will-o’-the-wisp.

Tom Shardloes anxiously awaited the promised meeting with the Marquis Glendour, who had gone to London, and applied in vain to the Duke of St. Casse for the loan of five thousand pounds wherewith to take up these damaging notes-of-hand.

The duke declared that he had invested every penny he had in the world on Sheet-anchor, and could not afford to part with a pound.

In this dilemma Glendour returned to Newmarket, prepared to defy Shardloes and trust to the chapter of accidents.

It never was very difficult to find Tom Shardloes at Newmarket. Like all hard and habitual drinkers, he affected public-houses, and it was at the bar of a popular house of call for the middle-class of sporting-men that the Marquis Glendour found him.

Shardloes was a little flushed about the face, and a little husky as to his throat: his potations had not been of the most moderate description.

He winked slyly when he saw the marquis enter, and exclaimed in a familiar tone of voice,

‘Turned up again, eh?’

‘It looks like it,’ replied the marquis.

‘A bad penny always turns up. Well, what have you done?’

‘Rather let me put that question to you.’

‘I ain’t done anything,’ said Tom Shardloes; ‘but there is no telling what I may do. Have you got that money?’

‘No,’ answered Glendour flatly.

The fellow’s countenance fell at this declaration.

‘What!’ he exclaimed, ‘you ain’t?’

‘Can’t you understand a negative?’ said Glendour. ‘I don’t suppose it’s the first time you’ve heard the monosyllable.’

Tom Shardloes gave a grunt of dissatisfaction.

‘Shut up!’ he cried rudely; ‘I want to think.’

He stirred his hot grog with a spoon, and poked away viciously at a lump of sugar which obstinately refused to dissolve. Then he sipped his grog, looking at Glendour, whose eye did not flinch, but caused Tom to lower his glance and scrutinise the top of his boot, which he tapped impatiently with a small cane he carried in his right hand.

‘Ain’t there no chance of your getting the tin?’ he suddenly asked.

‘None whatever,’ replied Glendour.

‘Not a fifth of it, or half a thou? Come, you can manage half a thou, can’t you?’

‘For the whole of the bills?’ asked Glendour eagerly.

‘No, no; on account like,’ replied Tom knowingly.

‘On those terms I could not find twopence; so you may do what you like. Now you know all about it.’

There was another pause, of longer duration than the first.

Glendour ordered a glass of sherry, and amused himself for the space of a minute by picking out the flies which would fall into it.

‘I say,’ exclaimed Shardloes, coming closer to him, and speaking in a sort of half-whisper.

‘Well!’

‘If I was to give up the bills, would you let me get at the horse?’

Glendour started.

His face grew purple with rage, the veins on his

forehead began to swell. Unable to withstand the impulse, he seized Tom suddenly by the collar, and shook him roughly as a dog would a rat.

‘Hi! drop it! I say, don’t you come that game with me! O-o-o!’ cried Tom gaspingly.

‘You thundering villain,’ exclaimed Glendour, ‘don’t attempt that sort of thing again! Men know the Marquis Glendour, and they know nothing bad of me except that I was fool enough to run through a fine fortune in a few years. Why, if you were to dare to repeat such an infamous proposal to me, I’d ring your worthless neck for you!’

With this he dropped him.

‘I didn’t mean no harm,’ whined Shardloes, surprised at the strength of his antagonist, and not daring to resent the attack which had been made upon him.

‘No scheming vagabond will be allowed to nobble Sheet-anchor,’ continued Glendour. ‘He’ll run upon his merits, and if it’s in him to win, why, he’ll do it.’

Turning on his heel, he was walking out of the tavern.

‘Captain!’ exclaimed Tom.

Glendour halted.

‘You mean that? It’s the straight tip?’

‘Certainly it is.’

‘I believe he’s square, and I believe the horse will do it. But that’s no sort of help to me. I’ve backed another, and how can I hedge with the odds at two to one on Sheet-anchor. It’s like buying money.’

He stood at the bar for some hours drinking with every one who came in, and trying to solve the momentous question, How was he to get out of his difficulty?

At about eight o'clock Tom Shardloes got rickety about his understanding. He leant against the bar in a manner perilous to glass, and talked incoherently, so that the waiter at length felt it incumbent upon him to take him up in his arms, and lay him upon a bench in a corner of the parlour, where Tom went to sleep, and soon snored loudly.

Glendour happened to drop in just as the waiter was in the act of conveying his precious burden into private life.

'Soh!' he muttered, 'our valiant friend has drunk himself under the table, and is compelled to withdraw for a time from the festive scene.'

He drank some brandy-and-water at the bar in a careless manner, and strolled into the parlour.

It was deserted.

That is to say, the drunken man and himself were the sole occupants of it.

He touched the bell. When the waiter appeared, he ordered a long pipe, a screw of shag-tobacco, and some more brandy.

The waiter executed his order, turned up the gas, and quitting the room, closed the door behind him.

Stepping cautiously to Tom Shardloes, Glendour bent over him.

The man was sleeping as sound as a top.

Glendour gave him a gentle push. There was no movement.

He had noticed that he placed the book containing the I O U's in the breast-pocket of his coat.

With a dexterous manipulation, of which a professed thief might have been proud, he drew forth the book.

A cry of delight involuntarily broke from him.

The sleeping man moved uneasily.

Glendour stood erect over him with clenched fists, every muscle strained to its utmost capacity of tension.

It was a false alarm.

Tom snored more loudly than before, and the Marquis examined his prize.

In the book were all the notes-of-hand which Edward Leslie had given to Shardloes.

Extracting them carefully from their resting-place, Glendour replaced the book in Tom Shardloes' pocket.

Going to the gas-jet, he held the I O U's one by one over the flame, until they were all consumed to tinder.

'Not at all a bad night's work,' he muttered.

Nor was it.

After this he stayed just long enough to smoke a pipe, and drink his brandy-and-water, and quitting the parlour, left Tom to sleep off his potations.

Tom did not find out his loss till the next day. He was looking for the notes-of-hand, to show a solicitor whom he wished to issue a writ against Glendour.

When he found that the precious documents were gone, his rage knew no bounds.

‘A pretty fool I must be,’ he exclaimed to himself, ‘to go sleeping like that and get robbed! I shouldn’t wonder if the cove’s been too clever for me, and got himself out of the mess. Curse the drink, that’s what I say!’

This highly original remark of Mr. Shardloes did not in any way help him out of his difficulty.

He had lost the documents which gave him power over the Marquis Glendour, and a great fear of Captain Leslie’s wrath came over him.

‘I shall have him down here now, asking me all sorts of questions,’ he soliloquised; ‘and what answer can I make him? I must cock him up some lie or other. Now, what sort of a lie is it to be, that’s the question? I ain’t particular; but it ought to be something he’s likely to believe, or else I shall get bowled out.’

He was not far wrong in his supposition that Edward Leslie would be ‘down upon’ him.

The very next day he met Tom Shardloes on the heath. That worthy was doing what he would have called a little bit of ‘touting’ business, for he was watching Sheet-anchor at his morning gallop.

A slap on the back made him look up.

‘O, it’s you, governor!’ he exclaimed. ‘I expected you would have been here before now.’

‘What have you done?’ asked Leslie shortly.

‘I’ve drawn no money.’

‘Have you pressed him?’

‘Rather!’ said Shardloes, with a knowing wink.

‘Do you mean to say you have done nothing?’ asked Leslie angrily.

‘Don’t be in such a hurry—you’re so sharp!’ replied Shardloes, with an air of injured innocence. ‘I’ve done my best. If you’d only give a chap time, I’d tell you all about it.’

‘I don’t want to hurry any man’s cattle, my friend. Take your own time,’ responded Leslie.

‘That’s what I call reasonable. I can deal with you now. That’s a deal better. Well, finding I couldn’t get blood out of a stone, I did the other thing, and let it alone. Seeing how the pot’s on Sheet-anchor, I thought a nice fortune might be made if he were run on the cross.’

‘Have you arranged with Glendour to do this thing?’

‘Of course I have. Sheet-anchor ain’t going to win, any more than Black Tommy, or Blue Devil, or any other outsider. He’s cooked, as safe as a dead dove. You take that for gospel, mister.’

‘You mean to say that you have arranged with this broken-down marquis that the Duke de St. Casse’s horse shall not win? That is to be the price of your forbearance?’

‘That’s it.’

‘You’re sure you can trust him?’ continued Leslie musingly.

‘It’s as safe as houses,’ said Tom Shardloes, with

an affectation of annoyance. ‘What a fellow you are! Anybody would think I was going to best you. Which way is your money at present?’

‘I haven’t a penny on the race yet; but I am just in the mood to bet heavily.’

‘You do it then, and go to those who are standing Sheet-anchor. They’ll be in the cart, I tell you. I’m on—every halfpenny.’

Edward Leslie walked away, muttering,

‘I’ll do it.’

It seemed clear to him, upon Tom Shardloes’ representation, that the horse, in turf parlance, was to be ‘got at,’ and hoccussed before the race.

What did it matter to a man like Shardloes if Leslie were ruined? He knew nothing of him. The lie he had told served his turn for a time, and he was satisfied. It was a good joke, that was all. He had been ruined himself; why should other men prosper?

And in his half-drunken cunning he chuckled over what he had done.

A circumstance occurred that very day which gave some colour to Shardloes’ representations.

A report flew like wildfire all over the kingdom that Sheet-anchor had broken down.

Something occurred during his morning gallop—no one exactly knew what the injury was, but the horse went back in the betting to six to one.

This was what Leslie considered his golden opportunity, and he took advantage of it.

Returning to town, he introduced himself into a betting-circle, and laid heavily against the duke's horse.

So heavily, indeed, that when, on the eve of the race, he looked at his book, he found to his dismay that if Sheet-anchor won he would not have a shilling to call his own.

The eventful day arrived. Every one was on the tiptoe of expectation. Leslie stood on the grand-stand, eyeing the course nervously.

The bell rang; the horses started. There was a rush past the stand, so rapid that he could not discover the colours of the jockeys.

A number went up on the telegraph-post. He referred to his card. 19—that was the number.

Pulling his hat over his brows, he stifled a curse, and, descending the stairs of the stand, mingled with the crowd.

Sheet-anchor had won by a neck!

Captain Leslie went away from the race-course a beggar.

The overwhelming conviction descended upon him with crushing force—he had bet against the best three-year old, and he had lost.

A few days after the race came the all-important settling-day. To avoid his creditors, he went abroad and lived in Boulogne on half-pay.

Isabel would not at first become reconciled with Glendour, who had realised a handsome fortune by the success of St. Casse's horse.

He was now the proprietor of several horses of his own. Having served a practical apprenticeship to the turf, he fought shy of sharpers, and made still more money, and it was some time before he forgave Isabel for leaving him in his distress. Mutual friends undertook to effect a reconciliation, and at length they were successful, for Glendour was made to see that there had been faults on both sides, and that his neglect had made Isabel cold and indifferent. Misfortune made them wiser, and once more together they lived comfortably, if not in perfect happiness.

He calls his horse the best three-year old, and offers to lay 100 to 80 that he some day owns a horse which will win what the Yorkshiremen call 't'Leger,' or 'land a Darby.'

WEIGHT FOR AGE, OR BACKED TO WIN.

‘You may talk, sir, as much as you like about a high strain and good blood; but I assert and will maintain that there is as much luck in the breeding of race-horses, as there is in other things.’

‘Possibly; but I would rather cover a mare with a horse that has won the Derby or some other great race, than I would with a dray-horse. Cat’s meat may be all very well, but I go in for blood and breeding.’

The speakers were a young and an old man; the latter being Sir Francis Hedges, an enthusiastic sportsman, and the former, Paul Winter, his nephew.

Mr. Winter had come into a thousand a year on attaining his majority, and he was notorious for having owned one race-horse and only one in his time, which he had backed for an incredibly large sum to win an important race, in which weight for age was the chief feature. His horse won the race, and he more than doubled his income; but some ill-natured and critical people declared that his horse was considerably older than he had represented it to be. An inquiry was spoken of; but the horse died suddenly, and the matter dropped. The bets were paid.

That was all Mr. Winter cared about, though he

knew as well as anybody that injurious remarks continued to be made respecting him, and that it was openly said he had misrepresented his horse's age, to save a heavy penalty and meet the other horses on unequal terms.

Sir Francis Hedges resided at Benham Hall, not far from Goodwood, and Mr. Winter was staying with him for the race-week, which was rapidly approaching.

The conversation with which we commenced this story took place after dinner, the gentlemen being alone. Sir Francis was unmarried. The windows of the dining-room were open, and the delicious fragrance of the flowers in the garden was wafted in upon the wings of the soft summer-breeze.

'Remember, my dear boy,' Sir Francis Hedges went on, 'that the Godolphin Arabian, from whom are descended some of the most illustrious horses now in training at Newmarket and Middleham, was sent as a present to Louis XIV by the Emperor of Morocco, and was purchased out of a sand-cart in the streets of Paris, by the fortunate Englishman who first brought the fallen monarch of the desert to this horse-breeding island. Again: the accident which caused an alliance between Spilletta, the mother, and Marske, the father, of Eclipse, is known to every racing-man. On the day when Stockwell and West Australian were offered for sale—upon the death of the late Lord Londesborough—the majority of Yorkshiremen present at Grimstone were inconsolable, because "the West" was bought by a Frenchman, while

“Lord Exeter’s cart-horse” became the property of an English owner. If fortune or accident had decreed that Stockwell should go to France, while West Australian remained in England, we are all aware that this island would now be poorer by many thousands of pounds.’

‘I know very well, that it is useless to try and turn you from your opinions,’ said the young man with a smile. ‘But tell me, have you heard anything about the horses which are at Goodwood?’

‘A sporting-paper has just come in; shall I read you what it says?’ replied Sir Francis, taking up a paper and drawing nearer to the lamp.

‘I shall be obliged,’ said Paul Winter.

‘Here is one piece of news,’ began Sir Francis. ‘We hear of the collapse of “Change-alley,” that long array of betting-lists usually erected under the Wood side; and their entire absence up to the time we pen these remarks is pretty conclusive evidence that no list-betting will be permitted at this meeting. The effect of the movement will be to drive the usual tenants of these boxes into the ring, where it is considered the layers will preponderate over the backers, and welshers on the course will reap a rich harvest unless a sharp look-out be kept on them.

‘On Saturday morning we were on the Halnaker gallop very early; for in no place is it more necessary to be industrious than at Goodwood, when the object is to see the horses at work.

‘A troop of wagon-bred animals belonging to an encampment of gipsies were grazing in the centre of the

gallop, which is bounded on each side by dense woodland, whence an old dog-fox, probably disturbed by a cur, came forth and trotted leisurely across the ride within a few yards of where we were sitting on a fallen tree, which had been riven from its roots by the wind.

‘A heavy dew was on the grass, and it was plain, by the absence of their footprints, that no race-horses had been on the ground up to that period—five o’clock.

‘A shout of wild glee from an opening in the wood startled for a moment the heterogeneous drove of “corks” and “screws” from their grazing, and out rushed a crowd of half-naked boys and girls into the middle of the gallop, and scampered down in the direction of the horses. Swinging the hempen and straw-band halters around their “shocks” of matted black hair, as they tripped with their tawny feet over the dew-damped grass, they rushed in among the horses, and each haltering the particular animal he or she was in search of, and vaulting on its back, all astride, it was soon a case of “devil take the hindmost.”

‘Some galloped, some trotted, walked, or limped, as best they could, up the ride in the direction of the encampment, the blue smoke from which you might now perceive curling above the belt of beech-trees that partially concealed it.

‘We wonder what Lord George Bentinck would have said had he been spared to witness the exercise-ground he had formed at such vast expense for his favourites, Gaper, Gabbler, &c., when he was so deeply engaged in

the confederacy between himself and the Duke of Richmond, cut up by a troop of heavily-shod horses owned by gipsy copers.

‘The Halnaker gallop is two miles in length, and from twenty to fifty yards wide, the narrowest part having been formed out of the centre of a wood by “grubbing” up the trees and laying the surface with some of the best turf that could be found in the park, which I may here state covers an area of 1214 acres.

‘The turf that for the most part covers this gallop-ground is excellent, but the numerous rabbit-holes render it in some parts “treacherous” going for race-horses. Many of these holes have in time been filled with mould, and branches of trees have been stuck in the ground as landmarks for the pilots of the horses to avoid them; but in one single night the rabbits, with which the park is infested, soon scratch out the loose earth, and leave the holes gaping, as it were, for the reception of a horse’s foot, and the consequent risk of smashing a fetlock.’

‘A man I know lost a very promising animal through just one of those accidents. It was obliged to be shot,’ observed Paul.

‘Diomed is, I am told, fit and well,’ continued Sir Francis. ‘We did not see him on the Halnaker gallop on Sunday; but by mere chance, and as we were leaving the course, we perceived him walking from the direction of Singleton, and at this pace he passed over the entire circuit of the course. He walked as steadily as a ten-year-old hunter with the best of manners, but he neither

trotted nor cantered. The chains and “dolls” were stretched across the course in several places; but he passed on the outer ends of these, and on returning, the lad dismounted and led him back to his quarters. This was at about ten o’clock.

‘As he passed close by us on the other side of the course, we can state that, so far as we could see of him in the light clothing that he wore, there was nothing whatever wrong with him, and a better-trained animal never trod the turf, nor one much better-looking. In fact, he is about the best-looking horse in the whole lot of acceptances. Had he moved out of a walk and trotted for even a few yards, we could have instantly detected whether he was really lame or not; but can only state that he goes perfectly sound in his walk, and if there was anything very seriously wrong with him we should think he would be sent home again instead of being “messed about” at Goodwood, where the course is as hard as the Queen’s highway.

‘We were also informed that he had done plenty of good work since his arrival here with the Cesarewitch winner, and turning up the quarter-sheet of Piræus we found his flesh as firm as a board. This horse has been described as possessing the most extraordinary power; but, as we had never before seen him, we could state nothing whatever in reference to his make and shape in our remarks on the horses engaged for the Goodwood Stakes. He has a good back and loins, with fair quarters, but has weak-looking forelegs, which are enveloped in cloths,

and the near one is badly-shaped and bowed inwards. Take him altogether, we may say that no sound judge could conscientiously state that Piræus is either a powerful or good-looking horse, although he may be perfectly free from infirmity, and if he should land the Goodwood Stakes in a common canter, his victory will not alter his appearance. He is not the sort of animal we should select as likely to win an important handicap over two miles and a half of ground.'

'I shall not put any money on till the day of the race,' said Paul. 'There is so much milking now, that until P. P. betting is abolished it is not safe to bet, except at the post.'

[As we have to use the expression 'play or pay' more than once, we will, for the benefit of our non-sporting readers, explain what P. P. betting means, viz. that all bets are to be paid on horses not winning, whether they start or not. Respecting this reform, we will quote the precise resolution submitted to the Jockey Club in 1857 by Lord Glasgow, and seconded by General Peel, but which the club refused by a large majority to accept :

'It being notorious that the present system of play or pay betting gives facility and inducement to the commission of fraudulent practices greatly injurious to the character and the interests of the Turf, and that such practices are yearly on the increase, the Jockey Club recommend that hereafter no bets on horse-racing shall be considered play or pay, and that the club will in future decline to warn off the ground at Newmarket, or

otherwise treat as defaulters, any persons who may be brought before them for refusing to pay bets lost on horses which have not started.']

‘There is not much truth in that,’ said the baronet, who was of an opposite opinion. ‘By the way, where do you go after Goodwood?’

‘To my place in Warwickshire. Will you favour me with a visit at the Ivories? You know I am to be married next week; and so old a friend and relation as you are, cannot fail to gratify my wife by his presence.’

‘With pleasure. I did not know that your marriage took place so early; but I wish you all sorts of luck, and hope sincerely you may be happy with Miss Applewhite. She belongs to a good family, and I think you told me will have five hundred a-year.’

‘Yes.’

‘Enough to keep her in pin-money,’ said Sir Francis. ‘Well, consider it an engagement; and as you spend the honeymoon at home, I will come and stay with you for a week or so.’

Paul Winter looked haggard and care-worn. The immediate prospect of his marriage did not seem to have made him happy.

Possibly he had something on his mind. Perhaps he could not forget what people said about him, and his mind went back to the day when his horse won the race, and he stood with a palpitating heart in the weighing-room, that singular place which has been thus excellently described :

'WEIGHING-ROOM AT DONCASTER.

'It differs, indeed, very little—certainly in no essential particular—from the apartment devoted to the same purpose, in another of the four blocks, or rather in one of the three, before this fourth building had been added. There are the scales, with the neatly painted iron-framed and cane-seated chair, in which the jockey seats himself, with saddle, girths, shotted cloths, bridle, and bit, to be weighed, before and after the race; there is the weighing-clerk at his table in front of the scales; there is the same neat arrangement round the walls for the toilet of jockeys and horses too; and that is well nigh all.

'But the weighing-room is a place so full of suggestions and strange facts—stranger, a great deal, than the fictions which have been ingeniously wrought out of them—that we linger in it, perhaps against the strict letter of the law, which prohibits "admittance except on business."

'Much has been said, justly and unjustly, of the men and lads whose vocation is the guiding these highly-trained thoroughbreds to the goal; but, taking all circumstances fairly into account, the temptations, the inordinate gratification of personal vanity, and the ignorant love of popular applause, it is hard to say that jockeys are worse than other men.

'In the stable, where so much of their first years have been passed, an ambition has most likely sprung up; and who shall say that this ambition was an unworthy one in a poor lad, fond of the only creature in

whose constant companionship he lives, and possibly founding his most selfish hopes of preferment on his affection for that very brute? Stranger things have been, we repeat, than the imaginary histories of stable-lads who have linked their fortunes with those of the colts and fillies they have tended; who, while looking after their charges—walking, cantering, galloping, sweating, dressing, and feeding them, day after day—setting their boxes fair and straight, even to the nice arrangement of the straws at their heels—polishing their bits till they have shone like a butler's silver spoons—cleaning out their cribs till not the husk of an oat could be picked out with a lady's finest needle—have cherished fond hopes that they, the humble horse-boys, might have the long-toiled-for honour, and glory, and proud delight of some day steering the objects of their adoration to victory.

‘It is odd to think how a too hasty physical development has sometimes played havoc with a boy's hope and ambition. “If my *ighth* hadn't stood in my way,” said a certain “head lad” of forty-five or thereabout, “I should ha' been a deal *igher* than what I am at present.” And many a groom will speak with sad regret of those days in early boyhood when he was seized with the alarming symptoms of a rapid and a fatal growth, which would morally, though not physically, “keep him down.” It is impossible to avoid speculations of this kind, in the midst of others, perhaps, which are not so creditable, when one stands idly in the weighing-room, while,

each in his turn, the jockeys seat themselves in the scale, grasp with one hand the iron framework overhead, and raise their feet from the floor, thrusting out their top-boots that all may plainly see "there is no deception." All romance apart, however, it is a desirable sort of "getting behind the scenes" to visit the weighing-room, which is dressing-room likewise for the jockeys, when they are effecting the change from harlequin's daylight-self to harlequin; casting the slough of the grub, and emerging radiant as the butterfly.'

Whether Paul Winter was rightly accused or not was a question for his own conscience.

The young lady whom he was about to marry was Miss Beatrice Applewhite, a high-spirited girl whose father had been dead some years, and who was so much attached to her mother, that she had some difficulty in persuading herself to leave home even for her wedding.

When the racing at Goodwood was over, Mr. Paul Winter went to London and was married, taking his young wife to his country-house, the Ivories, the same day.

A month elapsed, and Sir Francis Hedges wrote to say that he was suffering from an attack of gout, which prevented him from paying the promised visit to his nephew; but he added in his letter, 'Will you take compassion on an old fellow, and come and visit me? I am an invalid, but will do all in my power to render your wife and yourself happy and comfortable.'

So they went to Benham Hall to visit Sir Francis Hedges.

Already had Beatrice found her husband moody and abstracted, and she puzzled herself in vain conjectures to discover the cause of his preoccupation and moodiness, hoping that he would be less gloomy at his uncle's. In this expectation she was disappointed, and they soon returned to Paul Winter's own house; Sir Francis, who had recovered from his attack, accompanying them. They were visited by friends occasionally, and it was arranged they should give parties and go out visiting.

The mansion in which they lived was a large, handsomely-furnished residence with spacious rooms, long corridors, and luxurious furniture.

Beatrice found herself perfectly at home there. True, there was no great change of scene, but the big house was at the extremity of a large and dense wood, so that she could enjoy long walks.

Paul Winter had always been addicted to long walks, and he had what Beatrice called his black moments.

When these came he was absorbed by his thoughts, and his preoccupation rendered it difficult to gain his attention, even by addressing him repeatedly.

Now that the time was his own, and he was not occupied with racing pursuits, his rambles in the wood became more frequent than ever.

Beatrice asked him where he had been one day.

'Only for a walk in the wood,' he replied.

‘You must take me some day to see a place which is so full of interest for you.’

‘Painful interest.’

‘Why visit it, then?’

‘My dear child,’ he said sternly, ‘busy yourself with your own affairs; do not seek to pry into mine.’

Much hurt, she turned away to conceal her tears.

Taking no notice of her, he turned into his library, and she did not see him again until dinner-time.

That night they went to bed late.

It was a lovely moonlight night, and they had strolled about the spacious garden attached to the house, listening to numerous anecdotes told them by Sir Francis, who was in a good vein.

Beatrice was just sinking to sleep, when she thought Paul was leaving the room.

Opening her eyes, she saw the door shut.

Peering around, she found that she was the sole occupant of the bed.

While wrapped in astonishment at this discovery, and at the fact that her husband’s clothes and hat were missing from the back of the chair on which he usually hung them, she heard a garden-gate shut.

Rushing to the window, she saw Paul walking quickly along a gravel-path.

Whither could he be going?

Her suspicions were aroused.

With a palpitating heart Beatrice sought her bed, after straining her eyeballs by peering into the dark

night, restlessly watching the spot where her husband had disappeared, wondering if he would appear with any woman hanging upon his arm.

But seeing nothing, and feeling cold, she retired to the great Arabian bedstead in which she slept, and, pulling the clothes around her white shoulders, drew back the curtains, so that she might see the moonlight, which appeared in fitful patches when the heavy clouds permitted it to be seen.

Sleep was out of the question. For three long weary hours she watched and waited ; starting up at every sound, and thinking it heralded the return of Paul.

Every moaning of the wind among the trees, every mysterious creaking noise made by the old furniture, every flap of a bat's wing in the wide chimney, she fancied appertained to Paul ; only the moaning of the wind she hated, because it was so like a woman's voice.

‘ O,’ she cried in a voice full of agony, ‘ if I should find myself deceived in him ! Has he loved before ? Why should he undertake these journeys by night ? There is some dreadful mystery in all this.’

At length she grew superstitious, and saw strange forms flitting about in the air, gibing at her and uttering mocking words.

Wicked spirits these were, taunting her with her neglected condition, and singing the praises of some fairer creature who had stolen her husband's love.

Unable to bear the strain upon her over-wrought

nerves, Beatrice succumbed, and with a low cry became insensible.

How long she continued in this state she did not know, but when she recovered her senses she flung her arms around her in a wild fashion, indicative of a restless longing, and exclaimed :

‘ O Paul, why have you deserted me ?’

‘ My darling,’ said a voice, so close to her that she was startled, ‘ what are you dreaming about ? I have not deserted you. Here am I by your side.’

She rose up in the bed, scarcely able to believe the evidence of her senses. The faint light of the moon enabled her to see her husband sitting up by her side. He was undressed, and did not seem like one who had for more than three hours been indulging in a nocturnal ramble in the depths of the forest.

‘ You, Paul !’ she ejaculated.

‘ Why not, my dear ? Whom did you expect to see ?’

‘ I—I thought I was alone—that you went out, and I saw you through the window plunge into a thicket leading to the forest, and that—that I kept a weary vigil until my poor brain could bear it no longer.’

‘ Dreams, dreams ! all dreams !’ said Paul.

A dark frown came over his face, which fortunately she did not see. It vanished as it came. He put his arm round her waist, and supporting her continued :

‘ Dismiss your fears, dearest ; you are low and nervous to-night.’

‘ Yes,’ she replied laconically.

‘Your imagination, always vivid, has betrayed you, and led you away. I have not moved from this room to-night.’

‘Have not moved from this room to-night,’ she repeated slowly.

‘No, indeed I have not. You surely do not disbelieve me, dearest. Come, kiss me sweetly, as you always do, and I will hold you in my arms until you go to sleep again.’

Still tired and weak, she allowed her head to sink on his breast, and, only half satisfied, fell into a fitful and uneasy slumber, from which, however, she did not wake until the golden morn was streaming into the room, and she was still locked in her husband’s close embrace.

‘He must love me,’ she murmured.

Gently disengaging herself from his clinging arms, she rose and dressed herself.

Paul slept soundly: his walk had evidently fatigued him, and it was past the breakfast-hour, nine, when he came downstairs.

During the interval which elapsed between rising and her husband’s appearance Beatrice had made up her mind what to do.

‘I cannot help suspecting him because I am certain that he did get up in the night and remain away from me for some hours, but I will treat him as if I thought he had done nothing wrong, still watching him, and if I see— But it may be ominous of evil to anticipate.’

Thus resolved, she smiled upon Paul, who was in high spirits. Sir Francis chatted away with his incessant gaiety, and so the heat of the day passed.

Towards five o'clock Beatrice rose from a brief siesta. Meeting the baronet, she said,

‘Where is Paul?’

‘There he goes,’ replied Sir Francis.

Beatrice looked through the open window and saw her husband disappearing in the same mysterious thicket which had absorbed him during the night.

She commenced running.

‘Where are you going in such a hurry, without your bonnet too?’ exclaimed Sir Francis.

‘After Paul. I have a wish to say something to him,’ she replied.

‘Stay,’ cried the baronet, following her in her headlong race into the garden, ‘I will call him for you. —Hi! Paul! Bless the fellow, he is deaf as a post! Paul, I say! He does not hear me, and she is getting out of sight. Dear me! how impetuous these young people are! What a thing it is to have sound lungs and good legs!’

Sinking into a rustic chair, he continued to talk to himself for want of a better companion, and remained seated, thinking that either the wife or the husband would speedily return.

Beatrice was possessed with an irresistible desire to penetrate Paul’s secret, if he had one. All her woman’s curiosity was aroused.

She found a beaten path of small dimensions in the thicket, which led through a spacious shrubbery to the skirts of the forest.

Crossing a small glade which intervened, she beheld her husband. The next minute he reached the trees, and, taking long strides, plunged into the woody recesses.

Beatrice had to proceed at a run to keep up with him, but she was not to be discouraged. Having undertaken the adventure, she resolved to go through with it.

For fully two miles Paul proceeded at a great pace. His head was bent down, and his usually severe countenance was more sad and stern than was its wont.

She kept him well in sight with praiseworthy perseverance. The path, though winding and narrow, was well known by him. All the protruding branches had from time to time been broken away, so that locomotion was not so difficult as might have been supposed in so wild a place.

Beatrice was about a dozen yards behind him.

Suddenly she put her foot upon a small snake which lay in the path. It darted its head at her with a venomous intention, but stepping back quickly, it only struck her dress, and hissing spitefully retired into the woodland, where it was lost to sight amidst the long grass and thick growth of underwood.

Terribly frightened, Beatrice could not help uttering a shriek.

This betrayed her.

Hearing a woman's voice in distress, Paul turned hastily round.

A glance sufficed to show him that he was followed by his wife.

Retracing the dozen yards or so which separated them, he confronted her. She leant for support against the trunk of a tree. Her breath came quickly. Never as yet had she come in open conflict with her husband, but a slumbering demon in his eye told her that he had a temper, and she dreaded that she was about to realise the fact.

'Why have you followed me?' he asked in a voice which trembled with suppressed fury.

'I—I thought I had a right to go where you went,' she faltered.

'What! am I to be followed about by a woman, who is nothing better than a wretched spy upon my actions!' he vociferated, as his hot blood made his face purple. 'I ask you again why you are here?'

His imperious manner roused her. Had he used conciliatory words, she would not have said what she did, well knowing that it was calculated to widen the breach which already existed between them.

'It is for me to question you,' she said, drawing herself up proudly; 'why do you rise in the night-time and wander in this wood? Why am I compelled to follow you in order to quiet my suspicions?'

'That is my business,' he answered, twirling his moustache fiercely.

‘I say that it is equally my business, and I demand an answer.’

‘From me you will have none.’

Then they stood glaring at one another.

All the angel had vanished from their nature, and the wild-beast instinct had triumphed.

‘Will you go home?’ said Paul.

‘If you will accompany me.’

Again he twirled his moustache, saying,

‘I could find it in my heart to—’

He broke off abruptly.

‘What else?’ asked Beatrice mockingly.

Seizing her hand and drawing her along after him, he led the way back to the house.

‘I will see that you go back,’ he cried; ‘and perhaps the virtue contained in a dark room and a lock and key will put a stop to your prying propensities for the future.’

Beatrice said nothing in reply, and suffered herself to be led along at his pleasure—or more correctly dragged along, for he went at a quick pace, and showed her no consideration whatever.

The return was performed in silence. When the house was reached, Paul, hot, dusty, and out of breath, pushed Beatrice from him, and said,

‘Go to your own rooms at once, and never repeat your conduct of to-day, or—’

He shook a heavy dog-whip at her.

She shrank back in horror and dismay.

Replacing it in the rack in the hall, he continued :

‘I know not what restrains my hand to-day. It is neither your youth nor your beauty. No matter. It is your first offence ; be more careful in future.’

Awed by his manner and the gleam which shot out of his dark eyes, Beatrice retreated to her bedroom.

At dinner they both appeared. Beatrice was handsomely dressed, and endeavoured to make herself very agreeable to Sir Francis. She succeeded, as she always did when she laid herself out to please, and after dinner he asked her to favour him with some music.

She consented, and they went to the drawing-room. The tones of a grand piano soon filled the apartment, and she sang a song which was evidently meant to affect Paul, who was smoking a cigar and drinking iced wine in a corner near an open window.

She sang about a love-match, a false lover, an unkind husband, and the subsequent flight of the wife from his cruelty.

Stepping up to her when she had finished, he exclaimed :

‘Do you mean that?’

‘Yes,’ she answered boldly.

Seizing her by the wrist, he squeezed it until she cried out with the pain.

‘Eh ! what’s that ? What’s the matter ?’ asked Sir Francis.

‘You my wife, and dare to talk of leaving me ?’ continued Paul.

‘Yes,’ she answered a second time.

Jerking her hand away from him, she ran across the room, and opening the door entered the passage. Sir Francis began to comprehend the scene now, and as Paul followed Beatrice he caught him, and putting his hand on his arm, brought him to a halt close to his wife, who was standing at the foot of the grand staircase.

She had clasped her hands together, and was giving way to the wildest demonstrations of grief.

‘O my mother,’ she cried, ‘why did I leave you to trust myself with this false and cowardly man? O, I am justly punished for my hasty conduct; but I will come back to you; O, yes! I will leave him.’

When Sir Francis’s hand fell upon Paul’s arm with a gentle pressure, and his paternal voice was raised in a tone of remonstrance, the young man’s rage subsided as rapidly as it had arisen.

‘Go to your room,’ he said to Beatrice. ‘You are wicked and disobedient; but a little reflection may show you what are the duties of a wife.’

‘I cannot admit that I owe any obedience to you,’ she replied.

‘It matters not,’ cried Paul, betraying a slight impatience once more. ‘We will not have an altercation in the passage. The servants may overhear us; and it is anything but pleasant for my uncle.’

‘I wonder,’ said Beatrice recovering herself, and unwilling to lose an opportunity of saying something unpleasant to her husband, ‘that you did not think of

that before. By this time he must have a very far insight into the happiness of our inner life.'

'He is welcome to any opinion he likes to hold,' exclaimed Paul carelessly; 'though I wish to spare him any annoyance which your temper may induce you to occasion.'

'I entirely concur in your view of the case, and agree that it is inexpedient to create any unpleasant scene.'

Up to this time Sir Francis had taken no part in the conversation, deeming it advisable not to interfere between man and wife so long as there was a possibility of an amicable arrangement of their difference taking place; but now that he was distinctly mentioned by name he felt himself called upon to reply.

'Paul talks very sensibly, my dear,' he exclaimed; 'very much so indeed; and I must say that it is pitiable to see these quarrels between two people who ought to love one another very fondly. Kiss one another and make it up; it is only a passing cloud. I am an old man; but I have gone through these things, and know what I used to do in the days of my youth.'

Paul was quite willing to act upon Sir Francis's advice, and took a few steps towards Beatrice with a smile on his face, with the evident intention of asking her forgiveness, or at least of kissing her.

This act of condescension did not appear to be at all pleasing to her. She withdrew to the foot of the staircase, and standing upon the lowest step, waved him back with her right hand.

‘No,’ she exclaimed, while a look of intense aversion and mistrust flashed from her eyes, ‘I wish to make no peace with you; all I ask is to be let alone, and I do beg that you will summon what little gentlemanly feeling you possess to your aid, and allow me to retire to my own apartment unmolested.’

The old look of ferocious anger again made itself visible upon Paul’s face. He neither moved forward nor backward, nor did he speak. He appeared to be irresolute.

‘If the feeling I invoked does not exist or refuses to assist you,’ said Beatrice, ‘I must appeal to Sir Francis.’

‘O, certainly, my dear,’ answered the old man. ‘You go to bed if you like; I will keep your husband down here, and take care he does not follow to scold you.’

Placing his arm in Paul’s, he drew him away from the spot. The young man suffered himself to be so led; but when he reached the drawing-room door, he turned his head round, and was just in time to see the last of Beatrice’s silk skirt disappearing in a bend of the staircase.

Sir Francis rang the bell for wine and glasses, and some of the best cigars, which Paul did not disdain to smoke. When they were comfortably seated, his uncle commenced a moral lecture.

‘You are pursuing a wrong policy with that girl, my boy,’ he exclaimed; ‘depend upon it, she is one of

those women who will be led and not driven. She is a spirited little thing; break her temper, and you break her heart.'

Paul made a careless gesture, which seemed to say that such an event would not affect him very nearly.

'Don't ridicule my advice,' continued the baronet, mistaking his meaning; 'though I now shut myself up like an old fossilised thing on a shelf, I have kissed the dew off rosy lips in my time. Rome, Paris, London, all knew me; but no matter.'

For a moment he appeared sunk in contemplation; a smile of satisfaction flitted over his wrinkled face; so true it is that old age lives upon the memories of the past, which brings with it a rejuvenescence.

Paul's voice aroused him.

'My will,' said he, 'must be supreme. I will brook no divided dominion. It is my creed that a wife should yield implicit obedience to the husband.'

'You are wrong,' answered Sir Francis; 'there must be a mutual yielding to insure domestic happiness in married life; but what caused your difference to-night?'

'O, some trifles,' said Paul, evading the question.

'You should have a mind above trifles. But come, we will have a game at chess; I will reproach you no more to-night; your wife will give you a curtain lecture, I'll lay a wager.'

'If she does—'

'Well?' asked the baronet.

'O, nothing!' answered Paul, laughing loudly and

vacantly. 'I shall kiss her, and tell her to go to sleep, I suppose; that is what you recommend, I believe. Where is the chess-board and the men?'

They played till midnight. Paul was careless in the extreme. It seemed as if he paid no attention whatever to the game. His king was continually in check, and the baronet gained a succession of easy victories.

Shortly after twelve they separated. Paul's face was flushed, but not with wine. He had studiously avoided drinking to excess.

On entering the spacious chamber in which he and his wife slept, he was surprised to find the candles burning and Beatrice seated in an arm-chair, with her hands tightly pressed together and her eyes fixed upon the carpet.

'What is the meaning of this?' he cried; 'I expected to find you fast asleep.'

'You are disappointed in your expectations,' she replied; 'I have no inclination for sleep; and if it is my caprice to sit in this chair all night, no solicitations or threats on your part will prevent me.'

Paul bit his lip, and his under jaw became rigid as he advanced to her and took her hand in his, grasping her slender wrist in a vice-like grip which made the joints crack as if they were being racked.

Although the pain endured by Beatrice must have been great, she did not utter a cry; her face wore an expression of enduring defiance, such as martyrs have.

‘You dare to rise up against me in open rebellion!’ he exclaimed; ‘you dare to tell me you have a will of your own! That must be altered, if we are to live together. I would sooner see you dead at my feet.’

‘I have no wish to live with you after to-day,’ answered Beatrice. ‘But let go my wrist, please; you hurt me.’

Suddenly he flung her hand from him, having caused a sharp diamond-ring made by Metcalfe to cut into the flesh. She raised her wrist, and regarded the hurt with a pitying air.

‘So you wish to leave me!’ he cried, with a wild reckless laugh. ‘That shows how much value a man ought to attach to a woman’s vows. This’—he extended his outstretched arm towards her—‘this is the false thing who has hung round my neck a thousand times, and told me she loved me—that nothing ever could, would, or should shake her love—that I was all in all to her!’

‘And have not you told me the same thing?’ replied Beatrice. ‘But why recall the past? Disillusion has come; we both saw through a distorted glass. I am an English girl, and cannot sink into the condition of the slave you wish me to be; hatred has already sprung up. The very thought of what I have been to you makes me shudder.’

She was very lovely as she sat before him, cold and disdainful, strong in her determination, fortified by her hate; and so he thought as he gazed upon her.

‘What has occasioned this change of feeling?’ he demanded.

‘You have a right to ask if you do not know, and I will tell you,’ replied Beatrice: ‘a man who is mysterious in his habits, who has secrets from his wife, who threatens her, and uses language of the most alarming description to her, is not a man to be trusted, loved, or lived with.’

In the silence which followed this declaration of independence both of thought and action she distinctly heard him grate his teeth one against another; his face became livid, and his breath was drawn in short quick gasps. Walking up to her chair again, he stood before her with his arms folded, and said:

‘You think that you can escape me; I tell you it is impossible. You shall be watched night and day, and, if necessary, be made a prisoner. No woman ever yet defeated me.’

‘I take so very little interest in you,’ said Beatrice, ‘that I shall be much obliged if you will put your second-rate tragedy-manner on one side, and permit me to indulge in the solace of my reflections.’

He made no answer, but, lighting a fresh cigar, paced up and down the room like a wild beast. At length, wearied with his exertions, he threw himself upon the bed, with his clothes on, and soon sank into an uneasy slumber.

Beatrice remained awake much longer. When she thought her husband was fast asleep, she approached

his side, and dextrously removed a small key from his waistcoat-pocket. This opened a desk belonging to him, in which he kept a private diary—so private that she had never been able to prevail upon him to allow her to have so much as a glimpse of it.

The desk was one of rose-wood, inlaid with mother-o'-pearl—the gift of his mother, he always told her. She unlocked it slowly, so that no click of the lock might fall on the ears of the sleeper and wake him.

Throwing up the lid, she speedily found the parchment-covered double-clasped volume of which she was in search. The early chronicles of a man's inmost thoughts and secret motives for strange actions did not trouble her. All she wanted to see was what he had put down in this silent record lately. It was the month of June, and under date the 13th of that month she read :

‘I have been sadly disquieted in my mind lately about Agneta. My friend seems to visit me in the night, and reproach me. Last night I could not rest, but was compelled to rise and make a pilgrimage to the wood. Beatrice suspected my absence. She is becoming tiresome, which makes me draw comparisons between herself and others which are by no means favourable to her. Ah, how I regret my passionate haste !’

There was a pause here. Later in the day the diary appeared to have been resumed, for she read, written hastily with a trembling hand :

‘A terrible scene in the forest. I was making my pil-

grimace as usual, when Beatrice overtook me. Alarmed at something, she uttered a scream and betrayed herself. The devil was rampant within me to-day. Some holy impulse restrained me, or I should have struck her; she must not know my secret. Thank God it was so; my soul is sufficiently stained as it is. O my mother! if you had not been taken from me, I might have been a better man. It was thy tender care which protected me, but—'

Here the entry broke off abruptly. Beatrice, however, had read quite enough to satisfy her that she was not in Paul Winter's confidence; the evidence on this point was overwhelmingly conclusive. Nothing could be stronger. Biting her lip till the blood came, she sat ruminating over the glimpse she had obtained into the inner life of her husband.

The man was the prey of remorse for some wicked deed which he had committed. Was this Agneta of whom he wrote his victim? if so, how? This question perplexed her for some time.

A sudden movement of the sleeping man, and a guttural noise resembling a groan, reminded her that she had not replaced the tell-tale volume.

This she immediately proceeded to do; and having done so, she went on tip-toe to the bed, and slipped the key into the waistcoat-pocket from which she had withdrawn it.

The sleeping man turned uneasily; his lips moved, but no sound escaped them. Beatrice bent over him

anxiously to catch anything that might fall from him in his unconscious moments. He spoke :

‘Ah ! confusion ! The fiends are coming to drag me down—down—down ! O heaven ! it is too awful ! The fire ! the molten mass ! The flames scorch my very eyeballs, my skin shrivels, my flesh cracks, the tortures of the damned are mine ! God ! this is hell.’

Beatrice shrank away from him in horror. The terrible nightmare, from the effects of which he was suffering, made his body writhe in tortuous convulsions. His features were distorted and made hideous by the dreadful passions of which they were the reflex ; his hands clenched themselves into fists ; and his delicate, well-kept, sharp, pink nails ran into his soft flesh, making the blood flow.

The paroxysm did not last long.

The wretched man, exhausted by his internal struggles, sank back on his pillow, and, utterly prostrated, breathed heavily through his open lips.

That night seemed to Beatrice interminable. The hours passed one after the other very wearily ; the day was breaking as she fell into an uneasy slumber, worn out in mind and body.

Paul Winter had thrown a blight over her young life. She began to see the wisdom of her mother in counselling her against a rash and hasty marriage.

It was late when Beatrice woke with a splitting headache. Paul had risen earlier, and was not to be seen. Washing her face with cold water, changing her

dress, and laying aside the ornaments which she had worn on the previous evening, she descended to the breakfast-room.

It was nearly mid-day. Sir Francis had gone out. Paul, too, was not in the house.

Beatrice had resolved to leave her husband's house, and endeavour, far away, to forget that she had ever been a wife. It was quite possible, in her opinion, to begin life anew, and with her experience to be happy in the love of some honester man than Paul Winter.

But before she quitted him she firmly determined to solve the mystery which surrounded her.

The path along which she had followed Paul in the wood seemed to have been well-worn and defined by the untiring feet of the diligent pilgrim. If it would lead him to a goal, why should it not be of equal service to her?

In spite of the heat—which was then great, the sun being in its meridian—she put on a broad-brimmed straw hat—one from the famed factories of Leghorn—and left the house, taking the path she had pursued on the first occasion when she came in conflict with her husband.

With compressed lips, burning eyes, and a palpitating heart, she pursued her devious way, often pausing to take breath and press her hand to her side to still the quick pulsations.

She reached the spot where her husband had detected her, and there her experience of the path stopped. No-

thing daunted, however, she pushed on; and after walking about a mile farther, came upon an open glade, which appeared to have been cleared by the hand of man. A small pond, overhung by weeping willows and many a cypress, was to be seen on one side. Its surface was covered with water-lilies, and she paused involuntarily at the opening to this space to take in its striking beauties.

There was no one to be seen.

Paul was not there; so stepping boldly forward, she made a tour of the glade, halting suddenly as her eye fell upon a rough flat bit of wood, a part of the surface of which had been cut away.

On it was engraved the following words:

‘This covers the remains of Agneta.’

Beatrice fancied that this Agneta must have been some woman he loved, though why she should be buried in unconsecrated ground she could not imagine: and she thought that now she knew why Paul wandered in the forest. He had evidently done Agneta some hideous wrong, and his conscience would not let him rest. It compelled him to make visits to her grave, and try to obliterate and atone for the past with a vain sorrow.

‘Alas!’ she exclaimed, raising her voice in lamentation in the solitude which surrounded her, ‘I have sacrificed myself to a man who has no affection to bestow upon me. All my anticipations of happiness in the future were so many silly unsubstantial day-dreams.’

Sinking on her knees, she wept bitter tears, shed over the grave of her whom Paul Winter had, as she thought, once idolised.

‘He must have loved her,’ soliloquised Beatrice; ‘if not, he would scarcely take the pains to journey so often to this solitary tomb. O, how thankful I am that I do not love him so distractedly as I once did! There would be madness in the thought that his lips had been pressed in hot and passionate love against another’s; there would be insupportable torture in the reflection that he had murmured loving words in her ears! As it is, I do not curse her, I pity her. Poor thing! hers must have been a short life and a wretched one.’

She sat by the side of the lonely grave until the shadows began to lengthen, and the hum of insect life in the wood became feebler and yet more feeble. The hiss of the gliding snake was still audible, and the cries of the night-birds, issuing from the hollow trees, warned her to beat a retreat before darkness came on and she was benighted.

A mist swam before her; how she got home she did not know. She staggered rather than walked, mechanically finding the path.

The knowledge she had gained of the worthlessness of Paul’s affection was a great blow to her; for be it remembered that she had plighted her troth to this man, and he had certainly for a time possessed her young and untried affections.

When she reached the house, she went upstairs and

threw herself on a couch. The fatigue she had gone through caused her to fall asleep. She could not have slumbered long before her maid roused her, informing her that dinner was ready.

Making a hasty toilet, she descended to the dining-room, and though reserved and pale, did not show any signs of unusual excitement. Paul was not present. He had gone to London on business with his lawyer, and was not expected back until the next day.

Retiring to rest at an early hour, Beatrice passed the principal part of the night in maturing schemes for her escape on the following day.

Paul returned early.

He did not speak to his wife, who, having seen him pass into his study, instantly equipped herself for flight.

She took her jewelry in a casket, and a little money in a purse. Her wardrobe of course she was obliged to abandon.

Taking the road through the wood, which at a distance of six miles joined the high road, she walked briskly along.

After having traversed more than half the distance, she slackened her pace, wishing heartily that she could procure a carriage to convey her to the station.

Suddenly she was confronted by a mendicant, who in a whining hypocritical tone of voice implored an alms. She shook her head, and told him that she could not relieve his necessities, not wishing to produce her purse to tempt him with its glittering contents.

Not satisfied with this decided refusal, and relying upon the loneliness of the road, and the unfrequented nature of the country generally, he placed himself boldly before her, and, laying aside his former manner, gave her to understand in an impudent voice that she should not pass until she had gratified his cupidity.

Alarmed at the man's manner, she was weak enough to draw her purse from her pocket, and hastily take from it a silver coin, which she presented him with.

Instead of thanking her for her liberality he made a snatch at her purse and possessed himself of it. Then he seized her by the arm, threatening her with instant death if she dared to move or raise her voice; and she, alarmed at his threats, stood mute and motionless, passive in his grasp.

Her watch and chain next attracted his attention; and when he had them secured about his own person, he bade her in a peremptory tone strip off her shawl and dress, as he meant to have them as part of his booty.

She refused to comply with his demand; whereupon he showed her a murderous-looking knife, which he flourished in her face; and she was just about to undo the hook which fastened her skirt, and allow it to drop on the ground, when the sound of a horse's hoofs fell upon her ears.

Thinking that some one was coming that way, she raised her voice, desisting in her efforts to undress herself, and screamed loudly.

In another moment the footpad had fled, and Paul Winter was shaking a horsewhip over her.

‘Ah!’ he exclaimed sarcastically; ‘so you have fallen amongst thieves, and I am in time to rescue you. Does not this little adventure teach you the folly of rebelling against my authority? If not, it should do so.’

‘I thank you for nothing,’ she answered disdainfully.

‘Don’t provoke me too far,’ cried Paul angrily, ‘or’—he shook the whip again over her shoulders—‘I will not answer for the consequences. You threatened to leave me, and I did not believe you had sufficient courage to do so. Fortunately I found out your flight in time to prevent you from getting clear away.’

‘I wonder,’ said Beatrice coldly, ‘that you take so much trouble over a woman who is so disagreeable to you.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Can you not guess? I meant to have made myself understood, but I am not very precise. Perhaps it is because I don’t keep a diary.’

‘You have been prying into my secrets again!’ he cried, uttering an oath. ‘But I will make you repent it!’

‘You cannot treat me worse than you did Agneta,’ answered Beatrice defiantly.

A dark cloud of mingled hate and anger settled on his face.

‘What do you know about Agneta?’ he fiercely demanded.

‘Quite sufficient to tell me that you are a brute.’

‘Is that all?’

‘Is it not enough? Perhaps you will allow me to continue my journey, as I am actuated simply by the laudable desire to preserve my life.’

‘You shall go where I choose, not where it suits you,’ he replied.

‘May I go?’ she asked mildly.

‘No!’ he thundered.

‘Will you please inform me what I am to do, then?’

‘Walk before my horse. I will not lose sight of you until we get home; then—’

‘Well, what then?’

‘You will see.’

‘As I am so thoroughly defenceless, and in every way powerless to protect myself,’ exclaimed Beatrice, ‘I presume I must obey your arbitrary will. Men, however, are called cowards who ill-treat unarmed women.’

‘You are my wife—’

‘Who was Agneta?’

‘That name again!’ he cried, lashing himself into fury.

‘Why not? It is very dear to you. Don’t you go to a grave under the cypress-tree—trying to atone for some crime, the nature of which is as yet unknown to me?’

Raising his riding-whip he struck her three times heavily across the shoulders. Although suffering severely from the pain inflicted by these blows, and writh-

ing involuntarily beneath it, Beatrice would not cry out.

When he desisted, which he did as soon as his sudden passion had spent its shortlived force, he looked at her a little ashamed of his violence.

‘Pray go on ill-treating me,’ said Beatrice. ‘There is no man near us, and I have no weapon with which to take my own part. Hit me again. It is such a sure way to increase a woman’s love for you.’

‘You have none for me,’ he answered sullenly.

‘Have I not?’ she replied tauntingly; ‘what excellent discernment you have! I must really compliment you upon your perspicacity.’

Paul muttered a curse.

‘Ah,’ said Beatrice, ‘I can now quite understand why Agneta died.’

‘You dare—’

‘O yes; I dare do and say anything, as you will find,’ she replied contemptuously. ‘I should, however, like to go on, if you have sufficiently studied the scene, which will make a capital subject for a picture. A man flogging a defenceless woman in the heart of a wood is quite worthy of perpetuation.’

Finding that he was getting considerably the worst of this war of words, he did not reply, but urging on his horse, motioned to her to precede him, which she did; and then at a slow pace they returned to the house.

Paul Winter had lashed himself into a terrible passion, but he felt some satisfaction in reflecting that he

had defeated his wife's attempt to escape—not because he felt madly in love with her; but he entertained a feeling very much akin to the genuine passion for Beatrice.

When he married her, he thought he should have a lovely girl to go through life with as his companion.

It did not by any means answer his purpose to see this splendid article of furniture, veritable *article de luxe*, slipping through his fingers; and when he got her home he pushed her into her bedroom, and closing the door, turned the key upon her.

Beatrice threw herself on the bed, and as she was very tired, philosophically went to sleep. She did not abandon her design simply because she had been foiled at the outset.

Her mind was still bent upon flight, but like a skilful strategist she waited her opportunity. Rising much refreshed, she looked at a clock on the table, and found it was near the dinner hour.

The blows Paul in his fury had inflicted upon her white and delicate shoulders had broken the fair skin, and made wounds which were now stiff and painful. An expression of fierce hatred stole over Beatrice's countenance as she recalled the particulars of the indignity to which he had subjected her.

To be beaten like a dog, lashed like a hound, and she an English lady! It was too much. Her blood boiled with suppressed anger.

Just as she was wondering what her irascible husband

intended to do with her, the door opened, and he entered dressed for dinner.

‘I think it is time,’ he exclaimed, ‘that you began to dress!’

‘How was I to know that you intended me to go downstairs? I was a prisoner in my own room,’ she answered.

‘You knew very well that I could not keep you here without creating a scandal in the house, which I have no wish to do,’ he replied.

‘It is a matter of indifference to me.’

‘But not to me,’ he exclaimed. ‘I came to ask you to forget and forgive what took place this afternoon. We are foolish to sacrifice our happiness to our temper. Come, kiss me, and say you will both forget and forgive.’

‘I will do neither,’ she responded resolutely.

‘Kiss me, my little lady, and be more amiable,’ he said, unheeding her remark, and speaking in a coaxing tone.

‘O yes, I will kiss you,’ she said; ‘you shall have the sort of kiss with which Judas favoured his Master on the eve of that betrayal which has made his name infamous to all time.’

He started back.

‘No, no; not such a kiss as that!’ he cried. ‘I want one of the old loving kisses, such as you used to delight me with when we were first married.’

‘Those days are gone for ever,’ answered Beatrice, ‘and with them all the virgin affection which I was

never tired of lavishing upon you. If I were to attempt to approach you with any scintillation of affection, a stern reality would wave me back. It would resemble a hideous monster and bear the name of Cowardly Cruelty. If by any chance I succeeded in overcoming this dreadful thing, a shadowy phantom would interpose its outstretched arms, and would call itself Agneta.'

'You defy me?' said Paul gloomily.

'I do. To the last extremity I defy you,' she said.

'Beware!' he thundered.

'Of what? Agneta's fate? Even *that* shall not deter me.'

'The devil!' cried Paul, red as fire, his eyes starting from their sockets, his fists clenched, and his whole body trembling.

He would have said more, but a great change came over him. The blood receded from his face, the muscles of his arms relaxed their rigidity, his eyes assumed a wild and vacant expression, and he sank back heavily against the bed, which broke his fall, and allowed him to descend to the floor without injury. A purple foam stained his lips, but whether that was attributable to an internal hurt or not, Beatrice could not tell.

Much alarmed, she rang the bell and summoned the servants, who picked him up and placed him on the bed. Sir Francis, learning what had happened from one of the terrified domestics, hurried to the room, and expressed it as his opinion that Paul, excited by the heat or overworking, had fallen down in a fit.

A man was dispatched on horseback to bring a physician—an undertaking of some difficulty, as there was no doctor within at least six miles of the residence.

However, in the course of three or four hours, a man of medicine arrived, and bled the patient, whom he declared to have been attacked by a fit of epilepsy, which he feared would degenerate into a fever.

‘His imagination,’ said the doctor, ‘must have been much excited of late, for the body had been worked on by the brain;’ and if he had known all, he would have had cause to congratulate himself upon the correctness of his opinion.

The journeys into the wood, the nocturnal wandering, the altercations with his wife, all showed that his nervous system was deranged, and that the equilibrium of his understanding was placed in jeopardy.

Ordering him to be kept very quiet and constantly watched, the doctor took his leave, promising to call again on the morrow.

His predictions were verified. Before dawn on the ensuing day Paul Winter was in a raging fever. Beatrice now showed herself to be a true heroine. With all the gentleness of a woman’s untiring and unselfish disposition she gave herself up to the invalid, and nursed him with a care and tenderness which elicited the admiration of everybody.

Sir Francis was profuse in his encomiums, but she did not seem to appreciate the praise he lavished upon her. Hers was not a labour of love. It was not alto-

gether a matter of duty. If her motives had been narrowly scrutinised, it would have been found that she was actuated by the wish to heap coals of fire upon his head by returning good for evil.

She wished him to be told when he recovered that his life had been saved by her, or that she had been mainly instrumental in bringing about his recovery by the incessant attention she had paid him during his protracted illness.

Then he would more acutely feel her loss.

She waited until he was out of danger; saw the colour come back into his wan and emaciated cheeks, noticed a little of the old sparkle and the former flash return to the lack-lustre eyes, beheld the lips less livid, less parched and shrivelled, heard the doctor say that he would live, and prepared for her journey.

Sir Francis was in the study, engaged in cleaning a favourite picture by an old master.

‘Ah, my dear, glad to see you!’ he exclaimed as Beatrice entered. ‘Take a seat, and tell me what I can do for you.’

‘I came to bid you good-bye,’ she replied.

‘Me! bid me good-bye! Why, where on earth are you going to?’ he cried, laying down his sponge, and regarding her in a half-frightened manner.

‘I will tell you,’ she answered. ‘I really don’t know whether you are aware that my mother was so displeased at my marriage with Mr. Winter, whom she did not like; but she will forgive me.’

‘No, my dear, no; I never heard anything at all about it,’ said Sir Francis.

‘I thought not. You have been excessively gentlemanly during my intercourse with you, of which I shall always preserve a grateful recollection; and you have had too much delicacy to ask for a confidence which was not volunteered. However, the fact is what I have stated, and it is my intention to go and seek my mother.’

‘Why, what has Paul done to drive you away like this?’

‘He is a bad man. I have not complained to you, or to any living soul; but he has seared my heart as if with a red-hot iron, and my dream of bliss has vanished for ever.’

‘You talk in riddles, my dear; indeed you do,’ said Sir Francis.

Beatrice’s answer to this was to unfasten a brooch which held her dress at the neck; then she slipped the dress down over her shoulders, and showed the scars which her husband had inflicted but a fortnight before.

‘God bless me!’ said the baronet; ‘did he do that?’

‘He did; but that is not all. Perhaps the bodily chastisement I could have forgiven. He has deceived me in addition. I gave him my love, thinking that I was sure of his in return. I was mistaken. Paul had loved before, and so great is his attachment to the memory of his first love, that he incessantly makes pilgrimages to her grave in the wood.’

‘In the wood!’ echoed Sir Francis.

‘It is there where she is buried. There must be some frightful mystery about her death, or she would not rest there. I shall leave you with regret, but go I must. The voice of destiny speaks and calls me onwards.’

The old man’s eyes filled with tears.

‘This is sad, very sad,’ he said in a broken voice; ‘I had begun to regard you both as my children, and pictured to myself a happy old age in your agreeable society. How are my hopes dashed! True it is that man proposes, but God disposes. I had even made my will in your favour—I had indeed; and now all is over between us. You are going, and Paul, who is a bad man, I must not countenance in future, because he is not worthy. Thus I lose you both.’

There was a pause.

‘You will soon forget me, Sir Francis,’ said Beatrice in a tone which was intended to be cheerful for the express purpose of reassuring him.

‘Never, never!’ said the old man, shaking his head; ‘when the vine flings its tendrils round an aged elm, they cling so tightly, that if you remove the parasite you destroy the trunk.’

There was a pause.

Suddenly Sir Francis Hedges resumed, as an idea struck him: ‘Will you postpone your departure for an hour?’

‘Why do you ask?’ inquired Beatrice.

‘I have a reason.’

‘You will throw no obstacle in the way of my departure?’

‘None whatever.’

‘Then I consent, and will wait in the drawing-room for just an hour,’ replied Beatrice.

Sir Francis went upstairs and entered the bedroom, in which Paul Winter was sitting up, wrapped in a dressing-gown.

‘O!’ exclaimed Sir Francis, ‘you feel yourself better; that is as it should be. Are you well enough though to hear what I have to say? just a matter of business, that is all.’

Paul saw from his uncle’s manner that there was something serious underlying this apparent unconcern.

‘O yes; but where is Beaty?’

‘She is downstairs. That is a noble girl, Paul; she has nursed you through your illness like a heroine. You owe your life to her, you do indeed.’

‘I feel grateful,’ replied Paul uneasily.

‘What would you say if any one told you there was a chance of her leaving you?’

‘Going right away!’

‘Yes, right away for good and all,’ answered the baronet, looking him straight in the face.

‘I should not like it at all. I don’t mind telling you that much. But why ask such a question? Has she been pitching some tale into you?’

‘Answer me this, Paul,’ said the old man sternly:

‘ what cause have you given her to be dissatisfied with you and with her home ?’

Paul made no reply.

‘ Are you afraid to speak ?’

‘ We have had rows—all married people have rows,’ he said.

‘ Who is this Agneta of whom she is so jealous ?’

No answer.

‘ What is the meaning of the grave in the wood ?’

Still no answer.

‘ Come, Paul, be frank with me,’ persevered his uncle. ‘ I have never given you reason to be dissatisfied with me. I am your friend, and you may place implicit confidence in me.’

For some time Paul hesitated, a severe internal conflict was taking place ; at length he came to a decision.

‘ I will be frank with you,’ he exclaimed, ‘ though I am afraid you will despise me. The fact is, I have been afraid all along to tell Beaty. My honour is involved. You remember the race I won with a horse I backed heavily ?’

‘ Yes.’

‘ Well, the mare’s name was Agneta, and it was a weight-for-age race. I made a misrepresentation ; my mare was considerably older than I put her down on paper, and it was not fair at all to the others engaged, as, with her superior strength, she cut them all down, which she would not have done had she been properly weighted.’

He paused to wipe the damp from his brow.

‘Fearing exposure—for the affair made a noise at the time—I determined to kill the mare, and took her to a drive in the wood, where I have had some stiff fences put up as a private jumping-ground. I made her fall,’ continued Paul, ‘and break her leg, shooting her on the spot, and sending for two men and my head man to bury her; and she was put in a grave in the wood, and I stuck up a piece of deal, and carved the horse’s name on it in my idle moments. This affair has so preyed upon my mind, however, that it has driven me half mad. I have got up in the night and wandered about like a maniac rather than a rational being, and ever since I have fancied some one would find me out, my honour be gone, and I myself warned off every course in England.’

‘This is grave,’ said Sir Francis Hedges. ‘I would rather have heard of an intrigue with some woman; I would, on my word.’

‘What shall I do? what ought I to do?’ cried Paul in agony.

‘As an honourable man, you ought to say you were mistaken as to the mare’s age. You have your betting-book; you know with whom you made wagers; and to all who paid you money on your fraudulent representations, you should make reparation by refunding.’

‘That is it! I will do it as soon as I am well enough. And thank God I have spoken to you, for I believe remorse for my wicked weakness would have

killed me in a couple of years,' Paul exclaimed joyfully.

'One fault does not make a man irretrievably bad. I will still hold a good opinion of you, if you follow my instructions,' said Sir Francis; 'and by saving your honour you clear your conscience. It will be easy to say you were deceived, and have just found out the deception. Stay a moment, we will talk this over more fully, but I have something to attend to downstairs first.'

Seldom latterly had the old gentleman gone downstairs so quickly as he then did.

Beatrice was in the drawing-room, and he rushed up to her, saying, 'You may take off your bonnet, my dear; it is all right now.'

'What is all right?' she asked, looking up wonderingly at him.

'About Agneta, and the grave, and all the mystery.'

In as few words as possible he told her all that he had heard from Paul, which greatly relieved her mind; and he concluded by saying, 'You must forgive him for the blows and the ill-treatment. He was half mad, as he says. He will be a good boy in future, and we will have no more nocturnal walks. Come upstairs, and let me see the treaty of peace made.'

Willingly Beatrice allowed the good and kind old gentleman to lead her to her husband's room, and he related how near Beatrice was to going away, until the tears started to Paul's eyes, and catching her in his arms he murmured, 'Bless you, my darling!'

He was as good as his word ; and when he got well he made his explanation at the clubs, and stated that, from circumstances which had recently come to his knowledge, he had reason to believe that his mare Agneta had run with unfair weight, and should have had a heavier penalty, as her age was over that on the card considerably.

The money he had won was returned, and that which he lost, by owning his horse disqualified, was paid, which left him a poorer but a happier man.

None but Sir Francis Hedges and Beatrice were in possession of his secret. The real truth never oozed out ; and though some spoke against him, the majority declared no man who was actually a rogue would have parted with nearly forty thousand pounds to satisfy a mere scruple of conscience.

Paul's married life was now happy. He was not worried, and in his wife's love and agreeable society he found the true happiness which a contented mind and a clear conscience always bring to their possessor.

The husband and wife often smile at the thought of the mystery, and the name 'Agneta' is not a favourite with either.

Paul does not own any race-horses now, but he attends meetings, and bets to a small amount. He is always accompanied by Beatrice, for whom he now has such a strong attachment that he is not happy unless she is by his side.

Sir Francis Hedges has taken up the question of

turf reform, and is trying his hardest to get a friend of his to announce, when the next Jockey Club meeting is held, that he is of opinion that two-year olds should not run before the 1st of July, or be handicapped before the 1st of September; and that, in addition, he earnestly recommends that there shall be an agreement among clerks of the course all over England that not more than a limited number of four and five and six furlong races shall be hereafter tolerated at any race meeting.

Paul and Sir Francis have many a long argument about racing matters after dinner, over a bottle of fine old crusted '28 port. Sir Francis does not agree with his nephew, who runs down P. P. betting.

Sir Francis says that 'non-P. P. betting' will arm 'disreputable owners, who have no objection to a pull,' with fresh facilities for fraud. He quotes the case of Mr. Batson's Serab, who started for the St. Leger in 1824 without having had a gallop for nearly two months, and says he should have lost his money if he had backed him at 12 to 1, 'not P. P.,' though he might have got 40 to 1 if he had backed him P. P. He asserts that agents abound who will stand impossible stakes against a starter, because they know that every shilling which they lay is virtually safe.

Paul, on the other hand, replies, that it would be difficult, within the compass of half-a-dozen lines, to state two greater fallacies, as Sir Francis's experience of the turf must have taught him that horses have often won against which vast sums had been laid by

men who believed them safe. He mentions two—Stilton for the Northumberland Plate, and West Australian for the St. Leger. Sir Francis must be singularly ignorant of the caution which distinguishes all solvent ring-men, if he thinks they will habitually lay against any starter upon the faith of a jockey's strength of arm, or of some secret potion imparted by a trainer. Secondly, it would be impossible for any horse that had not galloped for two months to be, nowadays, at 12 to 1 for the St. Leger. The public has little occasion to fear that it will be habitually defrauded when it gets a start for its money. He is daily more and more convinced that the abolition of P. P. betting—if the Two Thousand Guineas, the Derby, the St. Leger, and, possibly, the City and Suburban, the Cesarewitch, and the Cambridgeshire, are untouched by the new rule—would be a sovereign benefit, both to racing men and to the general public.

And they stay so long talking, and get so hot over their argument, that Beatrice is obliged to come down and say something about 'Agneta' and 'weight for age' to get them to go upstairs to tea.

On the Derby Day Sir Francis and Paul are always to be met with in the Ring, on the Stand, or at Mitchell's 'Downs' Hotel, where they are sure of getting genuine champagne and a good dinner at a reasonable price, which is worth knowing on such an occasion.

THE ADMIRAL'S HOBBY.

ADMIRAL SPARKES was a man with a hobby. He had been a sailor all his life, and when laid on the shelf he busied himself in breeding horses, hoping some day to produce the winner of the great races of the year.

He lived in a retired part of Hampshire, on the coast, and spent the major part of his income on his stud farm.

Of course he bestowed but little attention on the education and training of his daughter Bessie. Having engaged a governess for her, he thought he had done enough, and went to his horse-breeding with renewed zest. His two sons were in the navy, and working their way up in a manner creditable to themselves. So altogether he had very little to trouble his mind.

As for Miss Westerton, her task was easy enough. Bessie Sparkes was a quiet, docile, easily-managed girl of thirteen, passably handsome, and an heiress, her maternal uncle having left her a large sum by will.

Matters went on with unvaried serenity for four years. The admiral was always about to win his great race. He had two horses, called Cast Iron and England's Glory, with several engagements, but at the last moment, as usual, he found something wrong with and scratched them.

He had been over to a neighbouring town on business, and brought home with him a Captain Cranworth, whom he told Bessie privately he had met at an inn. Miss Westerton thought it rash of him to introduce a strange man, of whom he knew nothing, to his household. Remonstrance would have only overwhelmed her with reproaches and argument, so she held her peace.

When the admiral took a crotchet into his head, there was no eradicating it; and it was clear that he had conceived a liking for this Captain Cranworth.

At dinner Miss Westerton soon discovered the cause of his partiality to the stranger. Captain Cranworth was an excellent listener. He took the utmost interest in horse-racing, and flattered the old man to the top of his bent. Now and then he would judiciously introduce an argument antagonistic to the admiral's theory, but only for the purpose of being beaten, and he bore his defeats with fortitude.

The admiral drank Burgundy; so did he. The admiral played chess; so did he,—the admiral winning four games out of seven. Such identity of taste was really extraordinary.

The captain was a man about the average height, thick-set, having the appearance of a naval man, which he declared he was, wearing bushy whiskers, and being on the whole good-looking.

Miss Westerton remarked that he cast frequent glances in the direction of Bessie—who had developed into a fine handsome girl—and it struck her at once that

the stranger was skilfully endeavouring to insinuate himself into the admiral's confidence, for the purpose of making love to his daughter, whom he had perchance heard described as an heiress.

At a late hour the captain was about to take his leave, when the admiral exclaimed,

'Not a bit of it, my dear sir! Couldn't think of allowing you to go home at this time of night. We always keep a guest-chamber, and to-night it is very much at your service.'

'You are too kind,' said Captain Cranworth, smiling.

Bessie and Miss Westerton slept in the same room. Whilst undressing her governess asked her in a jocular manner what she thought of her father's new acquaintance.

'He is very nice,' she said.

'Indeed! If you discovered anything admirable about him you were more skilful than myself,' Miss Westerton remarked.

'He did not pay us much attention, certainly, but then papa is so selfish, that he will engross and monopolise any one if he can.'

Bessie was making excuses for Captain Cranworth. The wind seemed to have set in a direction favourable to him.

After, this Captain Cranworth became a frequent visitor at Admiral Sparkes's. The household began to look upon him as a friend of the family. His *forte* appeared to be horse-breeding, for he was everlastingly

engaged at the farm with the admiral superintending the men. But whenever he could get a chance he came to the drawing-room, and endeavoured to make himself agreeable to the ladies. His manner was polished, his conversational powers undeniably great; he possessed an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, and was altogether a man who could not fail to be a favourite in society. As a companion allowed unrestricted intercourse with a young girl, he was very dangerous. Bessie fell in love with him. It must be remembered that she had never been launched in the world. She was totally ignorant of society and its usages. In fact, Captain Cranworth may be said to be the only man whose companionship she had enjoyed.

Mrs. Sparkes remarked the fact, and held a consultation with Miss Westerton about it. She gave her advice, and spoke in an unprejudiced manner.

‘You know little or nothing about the man,’ she said. ‘He may be *comme il faut*; but in the absence of proof that he is a proper person for Miss Sparkes to know, I should keep him at a distance.’

‘And politely intimate that we do not want him here?’ said Mrs. Sparkes.

‘Exactly.’

‘My dear Miss Westerton, what am I to do?’ said the little woman, raising her hands in despair. ‘You know very well that I am not mistress in my own house. You know as well as every one else that my poor husband has his hobby—his delusion I call it—and if any one

humours him in it, he can turn him round his little finger, and do just as he likes with him.'

Miss Westerton said, 'I know all this.'

'How in the name of fortune, then, can I get rid of this Captain Cranworth?'

'It is a difficult thing to do. I should in the first instance remonstrate with the admiral, and point out the danger of an intimacy between Bessie and the captain.'

'If he won't listen to me, shall I—may I send him to you?' said Mrs. Sparkes with an appealing glance.

'Certainly.'

Being a weak-minded woman, she had great confidence in Miss Westerton's judgment and presence of mind. Half an hour elapsed, and then the admiral bounced into the room in a passion.

'What's all this you've been saying to my wife?' he exclaimed.

'Only what I considered it my duty to say,' Miss Westerton replied boldly.

'Is it any part of your business to turn the house upside down, and set people by the ears?'

'I am not aware that I have done so.'

'But I distinctly assert that you have.'

'Very well, prove your allegation,' she said calmly, folding her hands on her knees, and looking him unflinchingly in the face.

'Here you go and say that Captain Cranworth is not a highly respectable and estimable gentleman, and—'

'Pardon me, I said nothing of the kind.'

‘What was it you did say, then?’ he demanded rather more gently.

‘I asked Mrs. Sparkes if she knew who Captain Cranworth was; and what I mean to ask you, sir, is, whether you wish your daughter to become his wife?’

‘Why, no. I can’t say I ever thought of that; never looked at it in that light before,’ he stammered.

‘That is nevertheless what is imminent.’

‘It must be seen to. But look here, Miss Westerton—suppose, on inquiring, that I find there is nothing objectionable, as I firmly believe, about the captain’s family or antecedents, would there be any offence against strict propriety in permitting the girl to wed him if she liked him?’

‘No. Be on your guard, however, sir. Remember Miss Sparkes is an heiress, and there are many unscrupulous men who—’

‘Yes—yes!’ he said impatiently, ‘that is a repetition of the old story. Have you anything more to say?’

‘Nothing.’

With this reply he was satisfied, and bowing in his usual polite manner, he quitted the apartment. He called himself a blunt, straightforward, plainspoken, honest John Bull. So he was. But these John Bulls are generally consummate geese, on whom the sharks of society are continually preying. Miss Westerton fancied that Cranworth was one of the sharks, and nothing could remove the impression from her mind.

Admiral Sparkes had not long left the governess,

anathematising a 'parcel of fools of women,' when he met Captain Cranworth, and at once blurted out all that had passed. The captain smiled blandly.

'I had expected this,' he replied.

'I trust you are not offended?'

'Not in the least. Women will be suspicious, and a man's personal appearance is never a sufficient guarantee of his respectability except to a disciple of Lavater.'

'I did not join the cry, for I don't approve of running a man down,' continued the admiral. 'What I said to myself was, "I have no doubt whatever that Cranworth, when appealed to, will be able to put everything on a satisfactory footing."''

'I shall do nothing of the sort,' answered Captain Cranworth with his accustomed imperturbability.

'Eh, what?' cried the admiral in astonishment.

'If you do not care about my society, sir, tell me so at once, and I will relieve you of it. It was not by my own solicitation that I ever came to your house. I have the *entrée* of many superior, and I don't feel under an obligation to give any account of myself simply because some of the ladies of your household have thought fit to indulge in a little tittle-tattle at my expense.'

'Then you won't explain?'

'Explain what?'

'I—I don't know exactly; but I suppose they want to know who you are, who and what your people are, and what your antecedents are.'

'This is an impertinence I cannot pass over. I

have the honour to wish you a very good-morning, admiral.'

The captain bowed, and was walking slowly away.

'Here! I say, don't go sheering off in that way!' exclaimed Admiral Sparkes. 'D—the women! I say. Come back.'

'Why should I do so?' inquired Cranworth, halting a little distance off.

'Because I wish to apologise.'

'Well, I accept your apology; but if I meet with a repetition of the insult, I leave your house for ever,' said Cranworth grandiloquently.

'I did not mean—'

'Say no more. I do not think you are to blame, but I cannot submit to have suspicions cast upon my birth and standing in society. I am well known. Make inquiries when you like, but let me hear nothing of it. Go among my comrades; inquire on board the ships in which I have sailed and served.'

'Enough!' cried the admiral, extending his hand.

It was cordially grasped, and they went over to the farm greater friends than ever. Had the captain directed his bombastic remarks to such a woman of the world as Miss Westerton, she would have known how to estimate them at their true value. He now openly made love to Bessie, and no one attempted to discourage him.

One day Bessie came rushing into the room where her governess was sitting, and with flushed cheeks ex-

claimed, 'O Ellen! I dare not tell mamma, so I have come to you!'

'What has happened?' said Miss Westerton, laying down her work.

'Captain Cranworth has proposed to me, and I—I don't know how it was, I—I have accepted him.'

'O Bessie!' she exclaimed, much annoyed, 'how could you be so silly, without consulting your mother and father!'

'He was so eloquent, so persuasive. And now will you, like a dear good creature as you are, go and break the news to mamma?'

'I suppose I must; but, goodness knows, I would rather you had dispatched me on any other errand.'

Throwing her arms round her neck, she kissed Miss Westerton lovingly, and begged and prayed so earnestly that she would do as she requested, that she could not any longer refuse.

'I will go for you, Bessie; but I must say,' she exclaimed, 'that in my opinion you have committed an error of judgment.'

'How?'

'By accepting this man. You should always trust your judgment in preference to your feelings.'

'Time will show,' she answered, while the crimson tide once more rushed in a flood over her face.

Miss Westerton communicated the intelligence to Mrs. Sparkes, and from her it travelled to the admiral. The latter only exclaimed,

‘O, I daresay it’s all right. The girl is sure to be happy if she is allowed to please herself.’

‘I don’t know about that,’ responded Mrs. Sparkes, with a grave shake of the head.

‘Well, well, don’t bother me. We shall run England’s Glory next week, Cranworth says. Everything is going on well, and at last my perseverance will be rewarded, and we shall astonish the fools at the head of the Jockey Club.’

In six weeks from that time Captain Cranworth and Bessie were married.

Admiral and Mrs. Sparkes kindly asked Miss Westerton to stay with them a short time until she obtained a fresh situation, but she preferred returning to London, and accordingly did so. Before she left, Bessie took her on one side, and said, ‘Please leave me your address, dear; it will be one of my greatest consolations to write to you.’

She gave her an address at the Governesses’ Institution in —— square, telling her that wherever she might be letters were always forwarded to her from thence. That same day saw Bessie start for the Continent with her husband, and witnessed Miss Westerton’s departure for town. She was very young to marry, and indeed her friends deemed the match a most ill-advised one.

A few weeks elapsed—say, six or thereabouts—when Miss Westerton received a letter from Bessie, dated Ventnor, Isle of Wight, begging her to come down

to her at once. She would pay expenses, but come she must at any cost. Having nothing better to do, Miss Westerton made her preparations and started for Ventnor.

She found that the Cranworths were staying at a fashionable hotel, which, with Bessie's income, they could well afford. Cranworth greeted her as an old friend, and appeared to treat his wife with the greatest kindness. She fancied she detected, however, a start and a shudder whenever he approached her nearer than usual, or kissed her, which he was frequently in the habit of doing.

After dinner she asked her former governess to come for a walk along the beach. She expressed her willingness, and Captain Cranworth declared that he should esteem it a favour if he were allowed to accompany them. Bessie made some excuse to prevent his doing so, saying that she wished to talk about old times.

She did not speak a word until they got clear of the town and right away from everybody. Then she sat down upon a rock left bare by the receding tide, and burst into a flood of bitter scalding tears.

'My poor child,' said Miss Westerton in tones of commiseration, 'what has happened? Do not scruple to tell me, for the sake of the old confidence existing between us.'

'I fear you were right when you warned me,' she answered, checking her grief.

'Against whom?'

'My husband.'

‘Have you already discovered that he is unworthy of your affection?’

‘It is not that exactly. In fact, I know not what to think; but that there is some fearful mystery about him is incontestable.’

‘Mystery?’

‘Yes, indeed.’

‘You speak in riddles,’ Miss Westerton said, becoming much interested.

She crept nearer to her, and clinging to her arm, looking up in her face eagerly, exclaimed:

‘O Nellie, how shall I tell you! Imagine my dismay when on the second night of my marriage my husband woke up, and exclaimed, “God help me! I killed her. Yes, yes; it is too true; I am her murderer. Begone! you shall not drag me to the scaffold. Away! Beware, Kimberley! by G—, you shall follow your sister.”’

She paused.

‘Was that all?’ Miss Westerton asked under her breath.

‘I have heard the same fearful ravings many times since; and the horror with which he has inspired me is beyond my power of description.’

‘His mind may be disturbed.’

‘Yes; but what is the cause of the disturbance? Does not some horrible crime prey upon it?’

‘I hope and trust not,’ was Miss Westerton’s reply.

‘If not, why should he rave so minutely? He introduces a name—Kimberley.’

‘Who is this Kimberley? Have you ever heard him speak openly of him?’

‘Never.’

‘I trust, my dear, you are mistaken,’ Miss Westerton said, trying to encourage and comfort her, though her mind was full of vague misgivings.

‘Will you stay with me—stay as my companion, and give me your valuable help and guidance?’ she asked.

She hesitated.

‘Say yes,’ she went on; ‘you must and shall! I will not be denied. I cannot exist with him—*alone* with him!’

Thus urged, Miss Westerton consented. Whatever nightmares and horrible dreams Captain Cranworth was subject to in the night, in the daytime he was anything but a man stricken with remorse or overwhelmed with secret terror. He seemed highly delighted at the match he had made, was charmed apparently with his young wife, who had more than a moderate share of good looks, and was to all outward appearance a happy man. No objection was made by him to Bessie’s engagement. He had known Miss Westerton in his bachelor days as his wife’s governess, and he did not object to her as her companion now.

Three months elapsed, and still they sojourned at Ventnor. We are now coming to that part of our narrative which gives a fearful significance to Captain Cranworth’s midnight ravings. These ravings had continued the whole of the three months which Miss Wester-

ton had resided with them. Poor Bessie, with tears in her eyes, frequently sought her to relate her sorrows. The hideous circumstance was preying upon her health.

All three were out walking. The Captain was with his wife, and the governess was on the other side of her. In the middle of the fashionable promenade they met a tall handsome gentleman with an aquiline cast of countenance. The expression of his face was sad, but as he saw Captain Cranworth it assumed a terrible determination. A sort of spasm crossed his face, but instantly it was calm, stern, almost judicial in its stony impassibility.

‘At last we meet!’ he exclaimed, stopping abruptly in front of Cranworth.

The effect of this speech upon the captain was singular. He trembled and turned pale as death, a film came over his usually lustrous eyes, his lips were parted, and he looked as if he would have fallen to the ground.

‘You—you here!’ he stammered.

‘Why not? Baxter Kimberley has a right to be wherever you are.’

Bessie plucked her companion by the sleeve. She trembled violently. Miss Westerton too was nervously agitated.

‘O God! that name!’ she whispered.

‘Hush, dear!’ she returned in the same tone. ‘You must be strong; do not give way *now*.’

She saw the force of the remark, and making a violent effort became calm.

‘Well, sir,’ continued the person who had called himself Baxter Kimberley, ‘you do not answer me. Must I pronounce the talismanic name which will compel you to speak?’

‘No—no! not before this—this lady,’ he replied in a low tone.

Bessie heard him, however. The hot blood rushed in angry tide to her cheeks. This speech put her on her mettle.

‘This lady, sir,’ she exclaimed, emphasising the word, ‘is Captain Cranworth’s wife, and whatever you have to say to him you may safely say before me.’

‘His wife!’ ejaculated Kimberley; ‘poor child, I pity you!’

‘I have no wish for your pity, sir,’ she replied in a spirited tone; ‘must I remind you that we are in the centre of a promenade which is scarcely the arena for the display of your melodramatic talents?’

‘I will call. Where are you staying?’

‘At the —— Hotel.’

‘Thank you. Cranworth I think he said his present name was?’

‘Yes.’

‘That is sufficient. For the present, adieu.’

Baxter Kimberley lifted his hat to the ladies, favoured Cranworth with a malignant scowl, and walked away. But he did not allow us to go out of his sight.

Neither the husband nor wife spoke a word. The promenade became intensely wearying. On passing the

hotel they involuntarily walked to the doorway and entered. When they were in their own apartments, Captain Cranworth, who had recovered himself a little, but whose countenance was black as night, exclaimed :

‘Miss Westerton, will you oblige me by leaving us together?’

‘Certainly,’ she rejoined.

‘On the contrary, I wish you to stop, if you please,’ exclaimed Bessie, accompanying her remark with an imploring glance.

She resumed her seat.

‘Is there to be a direct conflict of authority between us?’ asked her husband.

‘There will probably be something worse.’

‘Of what do you speak?’

‘A separation.’

‘On what grounds?’

‘You shall hear. I ought perhaps to have told you all before; but the affair was so horrible that I could not summon up sufficient courage to do so.’

He was visibly agitated.

‘You talk in your sleep,’ she went on, ‘and have made the most terrible accusations against yourself.’

‘Of what description?’

‘You have accused yourself of being a murderer, have called your victim a woman, and appeared to stand in awe of a person of the name of Kimberley.’

‘Is that all?’ he inquired.

‘It is.’

‘Ah, you should have told me before,’ he said, twisting his moustache. ‘It is a bad habit of mine to talk in my sleep, more especially when I have been reading exciting novels. As for Kimberley—’

The door opened at this juncture, and our friend of the parade appeared upon the threshold.

‘Kimberley is here,’ he said.

‘This intrusion, sir, upon my privacy is unwarrantable,’ cried Cranworth, regarding him with a tiger-like expression.

‘Possibly there are two opinions about that. However, I am here; and with Mrs.—Mrs. Cranworth’s permission I will remain.’

‘You have my perfect permission, sir,’ Bessie said.

As for Miss Westerton, she sat like a person looking on at a play all this while. She was simply a spectator, not one of the *dramatis personæ*, nor had she any particular wish to be.

‘I have come to expose this man,’ continued Baxter Kimberley. ‘I cannot help it if my denunciation cuts short the thread of your domestic happiness, madam. I am not a free agent in this matter. I have a mission, and my mission is to punish this wretch for the wrong he did my sister.’

‘Your sister!’ repeated Bessie. ‘It is then as I suspected.’

‘Yes; Fanny—her name was Fanny—was young and childish when he met her. Her youth should have protected her; but no, he poured a volume of specious

lies into her ear ; and she became, as she thought, his wife.'

'But I am his wife !'

'Allow me to finish my story. God knows how many wives the man has ; but we discovered that Fanny was not his first victim by a great many. Naturally disgusted at his deceit and perfidy, she left him. He followed her, took her from her protectors ; and when we next heard of her she was dead and buried.'

He concluded. A solemn silence fell on all. Cranworth did not attempt to vindicate himself.

Bessie was the first to speak.

'Have you nothing to say in answer to this foul charge ?' she demanded.

'Every word he has uttered is true,' he replied. 'But I did not kill her. She died fairly enough. I felt her death more than anything that ever—'

He paused. The expression in Bessie's eyes frightened him.

'Soh—you have loved before !' she exclaimed bitterly. 'All your vows and protestations to me were so many well-spoken lies. My God ! And to think that I should have listened to and believed this monster !'

He went to her, tried to seize her hand, but she withdrew it roughly.

'Forgive me, Bessie,' he murmured.

'Forgive you !' she repeated scornfully. 'May I perish miserably first ! No—no ; you shall find that I have some pride in my composition, for I will leave you,

and you need not fear that I shall die of a broken heart. I hate, despise, and loathe you too much.'

'Bessie!' he pleaded.

Again she flung his hand aside.

'Miss Westerton,' she said, turning to the governess.

'I am at your service,' replied Miss Westerton.

'May I trespass on your kindness so far as to ask you to accompany me to my apartments? I wish to have my wardrobe packed up, as I shall quit this house within the hour.'

'With pleasure,' said she.

'Mr. Kimberley,' continued Bessie, 'to your tender mercies I commit the scoundrel I have called my husband. I trust you will give a good account of him.'

Baxter Kimberley bowed, and a grim smile played around his countenance.

That night saw Bessie and Miss Westerton once more beneath her father's roof. The admiral was indignant in the extreme. Bessie's pride sustained her, though she admitted that she had committed an error of judgment.

When the two men were alone, Captain Cranworth exclaimed:

'It is clear, Kimberley, that the world is not large enough to hold us two.'

'I have always told you so,' was the calm reply. 'But you have been hitherto too cowardly to fight.'

'You shall not say that again; I had better be dead and buried than subjected to your incessant persecutions.'

The gallant captain was becoming desperate.

‘Quite my opinion. How oddly our thoughts coincide!’

‘I never know when you will turn up; however skilfully I play my game, there is always the chance of your spoiling me. The girl who just left the room has a handsome fortune in her own right; she loved me, and I was beginning to like her. You come, and now she has started for her father’s. I shall never see her again, nor a halfpenny of her fortune.’

‘Fight, then.’

‘When, and where?’

‘Leave all that to me,’ said Kimberley.

‘No! Let it be done at once, if at all. Your life or mine!’ cried Captain Cranworth, goaded to madness.

Baxter Kimberley thought a moment, and said:

‘I have a brace of pistols at my hotel. I will go there, and put them in my pocket. Then I will proceed to the beach, hire a small yacht, and sail out to sea. About three miles to the westward are some rocks, utterly sterile, and without any vegetation except seaweed. At high water these rocks are nearly covered.’

‘Well?’ ejaculated Cranworth.

‘When I have fairly got to sea you shall follow in another yacht—sail in my wake. I will lead the way to the rocks.’

‘Ah, I perceive; you mean to fight there, so that—’

‘So that if one of us should fall, there may be less chance of detection and punishment.’

‘ Clearly.’

‘ Are you agreed ?’

‘ Yes,’ answered Cranworth ; ‘ any fate is better than the life I lead.’

It was finally arranged that Baxter Kimberley should start at once, so that no time might be lost. He went to his hotel, obtained the pistols, and hired a yacht.

‘ Pleasant afternoon for a sail, sir,’ exclaimed the man.

‘ Yes, very.’

‘ Will you have any one with you ?’

‘ No ; I prefer being alone.’

The yacht was pushed off, and he started as the pioneer to the lonely rocks. It was ebb tide ; consequently the rocks were high and dry above the water. Captain Cranworth, made brave by the desperate exigences of his position, was not long in following. The two yachts joined one another when out of sight of land, and proceeded amicably to the rocks. They landed and made the boats fast to a projecting ledge. Then commenced the preparations for the duel.

‘ Shall we fire point-blank, or at three, fifteen, or twenty paces ?’ asked Kimberley.

‘ Let it be the first,’ answered Cranworth.

‘ Very well. Now make your peace with heaven,’ said Kimberley solemnly, after he had measured out the ground ; ‘ for, by the Lord above us, I mean to slay you this day.’

Cranworth clenched his teeth and took up his posi-

tion. It was settled that they should stand back to back, advance three paces, turn sharply round, and fire.

They did so. The reports were simultaneous. When the smoke cleared away, Baxter Kimberley was seen standing erect, while Captain Cranworth lay upon the ground badly hurt.

Uttering a cry of triumph, Kimberley picked up both pistols and cast them into the sea. He bestowed no attention whatever on the wounded man. He might be dead or dying for what he cared.

Presently he looked round for the boats. They were nowhere to be seen. Here was a catastrophe! They had been insecurely fastened, and the receding tide had carried them away. Cursing his luck, and considering his situation perilous in the extreme, Baxter Kimberley seized the boat-hook, which was lying on the rock, and fixing it in a crevice fastened his handkerchief to it, in order to attract the attention of any passing fishing-smack.

He then went to Captain Cranworth, intending to cast his body into the sea, so that he might not be implicated by the fact of its being found in such close proximity to himself. He found Cranworth in great pain. He raised himself on his elbow as he saw his enemy.

‘Help me!’ he cried; ‘for the love of heaven, bind up my wound and stanch the flow of blood. I would live; you have revenged yourself.’

‘No, my revenge cannot be complete until you have ceased to exist,’ answered Baxter Kimberley sternly.

‘Surely such a time as this ought to reconcile all differences,’ continued Cranworth faintly.

Kimberley shook his head, and walked away.

The tide now began to come in, and to his great joy he perceived one of the yachts coming back towards the rock. If it were only the one he had hired! It came nearer and nearer. Half an hour elapsed, and it bumped gently upon the rocky strand. Kimberley joyously seized it, and, noticing the name in the stern, found it was his own. Without bestowing another look at his late antagonist, he pulled down his temporary signal, and jumped into the yacht, tacking for home.

He had left Cranworth to die.

He reached the island before dark, paid for his yacht, settled his account at the hotel, and started for the metropolis. The next morning Bessie received a note. It was terribly laconic.

‘Fanny is avenged!’

BAXTER KIMBERLEY.’

She was at a loss to understand this note until she heard, a fortnight afterwards, that the dead body of Captain Cranworth had been washed ashore at Ventnor. Then the awful reality was apparent.

Bessie never married again. She preferred living single to placing herself any more in the power of a man.

The admiral still continues to breed horses, and succeeded, in the year following that of his daughter's marriage, in winning the City and Suburban Handicap with Cast Iron. But whatever the merits of his horses may be, he never makes a bet. He runs them for the stakes alone, and from a pure love of sport. Most of his yearlings he sells, keeping only one or two of the most likely and promising to carry his colours past the winning-post.

He continues to abuse the Jockey Club, to the constitution and practice of which august assembly he has a great objection. We heard him only this year holding forth to a select circle of friends at Harpenden races about the club.

This was the gist of his remarks, as well as we can recollect :

The members of the Jockey Club do not know how much injury they have done to themselves and the turf, by invariably holding their debates for many years past in secret and with closed doors. He could remember the intense public excitement which accompanied the solemn investigation made by the Jockey Club into the treatment which Mr. Crockford's horse Ratan experienced, prior to the most sensational Derby that he ever knew—that of 1844. Mr. Crockford himself died very shortly after the race ; and a well-known sporting newspaper applied to the stewards of the Jockey Club for permission to be present at the solemn inquiry which took place, but its editor was promptly informed by

Messrs. Weatherby that the Jockey Club declined to admit public reporters to their meeting. Many of the wisest members of the club were of opinion that a Court of Honour—and the Jockey Club, when sitting in judgment upon Mr. Crockford's memory and upon the fair fame and integrity of his jockey, was nothing else—ought to have nothing to hide. Public respect for any public body, however exalted, soon evaporates, if it refuses to admit daylight when daylight has a right to admission. It should never be forgotten by such bodies as the Jockey Club that public curiosity about their debates and decisions is an unmistakable compliment. What makes them cease to be regarded as the fountain of honour, the mirror of fair dealing? Why their own short-sighted exclusiveness, which tends to make suspected, men who were previously above suspicion. He hopes to live until he sees the day when, like the American Senate, the Jockey Club shall sit with open doors, except upon rare occasions, when they elect to sit in secret; 'and,' he adds, 'I'll bet you the best dressing-bag Metcalfe of Pall-mall has in his shop, that the day will come before long.'

So fond is he of being listened to, that we believe he would allow himself to be again taken in by a clever adventurer as easily as he was by Captain Cranworth.

WON AND LOST.

THE incidents which we here relate occurred on that pretty racecourse, Tonbridge, in Kent. Seeing a great crowd round a list, we made our way towards the same, and there saw a very quiet although determined man in dispute with a couple of Welshers concerning a bet, the aggrieved party declaring that he had backed a certain horse 'one, two,' that the said animal had come in second, that they had been weighed in, and that, producing his ticket, he wanted his money, some two pounds ten shillings, and that he should not go away till he got it; also, if they did not at once pay him, he would take precious good care they didn't bet any more and fleece any one else.

They, on the contrary, swore with most dreadful oaths (as is the practice of these gentry, for being for the most part low ignorant brutes, dragged up from the gutter, they always garnish their conversation with fearful expletives) that the person demanding money was a liar, &c. &c. By this time some of the crowd, as is generally the case in most rows, began to express their opinion, and the Welshers being backed by some more of their fraternity, there was every prospect of a nice little row coming off.

'Pay me my money, you infernal set of scoundrels, or it will be the worse for you.'

‘You go to —,’ a certain place that is not generally mentioned in polite society. ‘Why should we pay you what we don’t owe you? You came and backed such a horse with us; if he had won, we would have paid. You ain’t coming here trying to plant the double on us.’

‘Your bounce won’t intimidate me,’ replied the aggrieved party. ‘I backed so and so one, two; he’s second; here’s the ticket you gave me’ (at the same time, imprudently as will be seen, showing the number), ‘and I want my money, and I’ll have it.’

At this moment we observed the book-maker put his hands with his book behind his back, and a confederate take it from him and retire amongst the crowd. The wordy war still continued,—‘I’ll have my money!’—‘You won’t!’—‘I will!’—when back came the man who had taken the book, and replaced it in the hands of the worthy from whom he had taken it.

‘You won’t pay and you won’t show your book,’ said the aggrieved party; ‘then who says duck um?’ ‘I, and I, and I,’ roared out some twenty or thirty voices, and a rush was made at the luckless Welshers, and as the race-course at Tonbridge is completely surrounded by water, there was no lack of that fluid for giving the cop-all-and-never-part fraternity a jolly good sousing.

But in the nick of time (and it showed great presence of mind on the part of the book-maker) he jumped on his stool, and roared out at the top of his voice, ‘Hold hard! Hold hard a minute! I’ll swear that fellow never backed the horse he says he has with me.

If he had, as I've said before, I would have paid. I wouldn't show the book at his bidding; but it's jolly hard lines if a fellow is to be set upon like this when he is trying to earn an honest living. Here's the book; let him show his ticket.' That was instantly produced; when, on comparing it with the book, according to that well-kept volume, the book-keeper was *right* and the luckless individual *wrong*. The *modus operandi* was as follows: when the book had been taken by the confederate who had stood by and heard the dispute, he quietly had retired and rubbed the horse's name out against the number which the victim had backed, and then substituted another horse's name in lieu thereof, which had been nowhere in the race.

The crowd's opinion—for crowds never pause to think—changed quick as a weathercock with a shift of wind. One brawny fellow—half ostler, half gipsy, all black-guard—struck the poor man, whom we honestly and sincerely believe had stated but the simple truth, a fearful blow in the face, which was followed by the others kicking and cuffing the unfortunate fellow, till, with his face all bruised and bleeding, his hat smashed, and his clothes nearly torn from his back, the police rushed in and rescued him. We saw him, some couple of hours later, leaning in a very sad and forlorn plight against the ropes a long way from the betting-ring and lists.

In conclusion, we can but advise the unwary to be extremely careful with whom they intrust their money.

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